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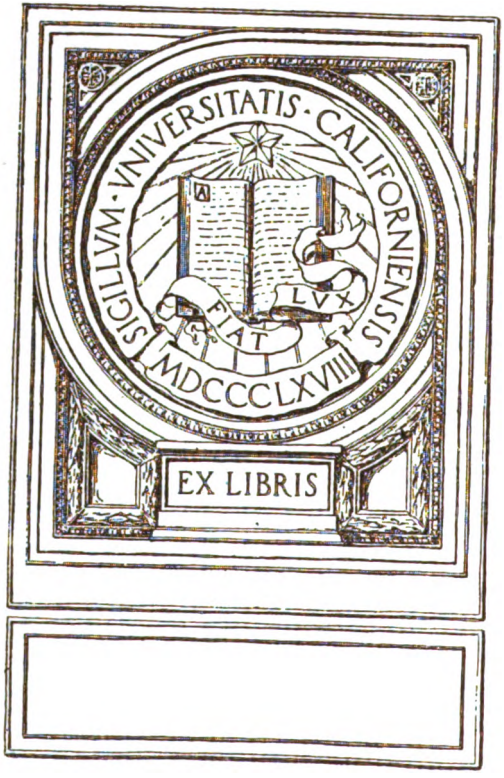
WOLKOFF-MOUROMTZOFF
(A.N.ROUSSOFF)



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MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDER WOLKOFF-MOUROMTZOFF

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UNIV. OF
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Alexander Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff
From a pencil drawing by
H.R.H. Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll

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ALEXANDER

BY HIMSELF

TRANSLATED BY MRS. HEATH DACRE

LONDON
MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDER WOLKOFF-MOUROMTZOFF

(A. N. ROUSSOFF)

BY HIMSELF

TRANSLATED BY MRS. HUTH JACKSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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PREFACE

THE Bolsheviks have come, and, whether we approve or disapprove of the Soviet rule, they have probably come to stay. And the changes wrought by the new dispensation are so far-reaching, that it is doubtful whether in fifty years' time anyone save a few octogenarians will remember anything about the old Russia—the Russia that stood like a flaming menace between Europe and Asia, compounded of both civilisations. That is why the decision of Alexander Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff to publish his Memoirs was such a satisfaction to his friends. For here is a man who can tell us about that vanished Empire, not only from the point of view of a keen observer, with an eye trained both as a scientific man and an artist, but also as a man who from his position in the world saw Russian life from an angle that only those fortunate enough to be born in the most privileged class could ever have the luck to see. So that these recollections are rather peculiarly interesting, for the aristocrat rarely has the artistic temperament or the cold, clear, unbiassed judgment of the man of science.

Alexander Wolkoff—often known by his name as a painter, "Roussoff"—has been a well-known figure in many European countries for sixty years—"le Russe génial Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff," as Christian Sénéchal, the translator of Keyserling, calls him in the preface to *Le Monde qui naît*. He is so remarkable a personality that without apparent exaggeration it is a little difficult to define the impression he has always made. That he is very handsome, very brilliant; that he has been a friend of many of the most interesting men and women of his time; that he is a most gifted painter and an excellent musician—these are obvious qualities, but there is something more. And this, I think, unconsciously appears

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in his Memoirs. It is the combination of quite exceptional courage, sincerity and presence of mind which has always led men and women to turn to him in their hour of need, with the certainty that he would be the right person to apply to, and that under no circumstances would he put them off with the usual cheap sympathy. To this is added a great sense of cause and effect which has made his advice valuable both in public and private affairs. The very remarkable letter of prophecy on page 156 is typical of the logical deduction of his mind.

Born the son of a great landowner, he saw the disappearance of the serf system, which ruined so many aristocrats. It was a reform which would probably have been of more lasting benefit had the change been extended over a greater number of years. His father seems to have been, from an educational standpoint, one of the most enlightened men of his or any time. I can conceive no wiser education than that given to the young Wolkoffs, or one more likely to fit them to be citizens of the world—with the exception perhaps of their religious instruction! But side by side with great care their father seems to have had lapses of extraordinary indifference as to the fate of his children. At an early age Alexander plunged with joy into scientific studies, and would no doubt have made a great name for himself in the particular branch of knowledge he adopted, as his keen critical brain and absolute fidelity to truth gave him the temperament specially marked out for exact research, but fortune willed otherwise and the great sorrow of his life has been that he could not follow his scientific bent. Chance called him to the management of men, and no one who reads the description of his work as Arbiter of the Peace can doubt that he had it in him to be an important figure in public affairs. His personal and moral courage are both exceptional, as I have already said, and the two qualities rarely go together.

It was, however, necessary to provide for his family, and he deliberately turned to Art as a means of livelihood.

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The late Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema told me once that when M. Wolkoff wrote to him to say that he was going to provide for his children by painting water-colours, he said to his daughter, "Poor Wolkoff—his troubles have weakened his brain. Isn't every capital strewn with men who have tried to live by painting and failed? And men who started as boys. Wolkoff must be over thirty-five."

Two years later M. Wolkoff wrote and asked him to go and see an exhibition, I think at the Fine Arts Society's Gallery. Again he said, "Poor Wolkoff—I suppose I must go. What on earth shall I write to him?" Sir Lawrence finished the story by saying, "Not only was every single thing first-rate, but every single thing was *sold*. In all my life I have never known of such an instance." That story illustrates what those who have the privilege of his friendship feel. He has that queer knack of putting genius into everything he does. Had he chosen music or literature or philosophy instead of paint, in ten years he would have achieved a first-rate standard.

He made a steady annual income by his water-colours, which sufficed for his modest needs. In between he found time to write what many people consider an epoch-making work of art criticism—*L'à peu près dans la Critique et l'Imitation dans l'Art* (published at Bergamo, 1913, by the Officine dell' Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche).

Of this book Count Hermann Keyserling writes in *The Way to Perfection*, p. 76, speaking of M. Wolkoff:

"What gave him most pleasure, as a true student of nature, was the why and wherefore in every question—and consequently in Art also. For as an analytical thinker he is in the front rank. He who has had the luck to listen to Mr. Wolkoff will not be surprised that Wagner and Liszt, Rubinstein, Tolstoi, and Pettenkofer, took especial pleasure in his conversation. He has the gift of tracing every subjective impression back to its starting-point in easy and most illuminating talk. He

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can light up every vague feeling with his clear comprehension, and this being so, he could not be satisfied with the woolly æstheticism which he saw gaining ground daily and in which he perceived a serious danger. That is why, as soon as his time was freed from painting, he decided to give to a wider public what he had so often said to a small circle, and the fruit of nearly ten years' work was this volume, *L'à peu près dans la Critique et l'Imitation dans l'Art.*

" This book has all the advantages of a work containing the sublimated essence of many years' practical experience, and it illustrated Wolkoff's remarkable gifts clearly and definitely. In it he has set himself the task of examining the question as to what objective standard is necessary to enable a person to be competent to judge of a work of art. He has attempted to show how fundamental the need for this objectivity is, whether in considering the artist's gifts, or his technique, or even the end he has in view, and he has, in making this examination, tried to disperse the current vague ideas of Beauty, Genius, Imitation, Artistic Impression, Taste, Meaning, Expression, etc., and to show what an empirical standpoint they represent. And as far as I can see he really *has* proved his thesis. With the keen sight of a Leonardo, with the intellectual clarity of a Voltaire, he has shed light on these obscure problems, so that everyone who honestly gives himself up to guidance can reap much benefit."

The book came out at a bad time, just before the War, and was unfortunately very unwieldy and rather badly edited, so that it did not find the wide public it deserved. I remember asking the late Mr. Sargent if he had read it, and he replied, " I'm absorbed by it, but I only read at night, in bed, and after balancing it for a short time on my stomach I get such a pain that I can't go on ! " I hope the author may be induced to issue a more practical edition.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, M. Wolkoff was left a large

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property, and became a rich man. With joy he began to turn his agricultural and scientific knowledge to account, and was in a fair way to make his estate an object lesson of what *could* be done when the War ruined him finally. Fortunately his beautiful palace in Venice remains to him, and there he lives, with his beloved daughter, herself a very gifted musician, and with literary tastes which make her very valuable to him in his writing. The privations of the War have considerably undermined his health, and a nervous affection of his right hand due to this cause prevents his painting any more. In spite of this, he has managed since the Revolution to write an opera, and now appear these Memoirs, which are an interesting testimony to what was fine under the régime of the Tsars.

ANNABEL JACKSON.

Palm Sunday, 1928.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It is with great regret that I have to announce the death of Monsieur Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff while this book was actually in the process of printing. It was his great desire to live to see the book published, but it was not to be, and it can now only be dedicated to his memory.

At the same time, I should like to express the respectful gratitude of Monsieur Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff's family, and my own, to Her Royal Highness Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, for her kindness in lending us, for reproduction, a pencil drawing which she made of the author several years ago. This now finds its proper place as the frontispiece to this volume.

JOHN MURRAY.

August, 1928.

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MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDER WOLKOFF-MOUROMTZOFF

(A. N. ROUSSOFF)

CHAPTER I

I WAS born in Petersburg the 23rd of January (Russian style), 1844. I was two years old when my mother died. So I have very few memories of my earliest childhood. I remember sitting on my mother's knee, and I remember being carried into her room and immediately carried out again. It was probably the day when—realising she was dying—she wanted to see me for the last time. But the thing I remember best was seeing a lady fully dressed, sitting on her bed under an open umbrella, with cork-screws made out of orange-peel hanging from her nostrils. I learned later that this was an insane relation—called Gribojédoff. I had two brothers, one a year older and one a year younger than myself.

It appears that my father soon moved us to Gouslistchi, his property in the Pskoff province, and there I see myself, aged about five or six, playing in the garden, swinging on a giant's stride, building earth forts and putting two fairly big models of cannon into them, and covering every bit of paper that fell into my hands with scribbles. My father laughingly corrected my drawings when they succeeded in resembling anything tangible, and he sometimes read us little stories that made me cry; but our education was confided to the care of a German governess, whom I can only recall vaguely.

The only things I can remember about this time are a dinner suddenly interrupted by a servant who announced that someone was trying to poison us, and our games with a young bear.

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We were all together in the dining-room, and the pope of our village church—whom my father had invited to dinner—was amusing us with various stories. He was explaining to us why, on our estates, there were no "Old Believers," whereas the people on those marching with us, on both sides, belonged to that faith. The pope was a very big man, with a face scarred by smallpox. He liked joking with us children. "Directly I hear that any peasant has leanings towards Old Orthodoxy, I take him by the collar—and do like that," he said, imitating the action. "And then I let him go!" "Is that really enough?" we asked, astonished. "Yes, quite enough. See—like that." And his gesture of shaking the man was so funny that we all roared.

"Sit down, children," said my father, coming in. "We must have our dinner; the soup is served."

At that moment in ran a servant, quite pale with fright, and called out, "Wait, sir; someone is trying to poison you." And he stood before my father, trembling.

"Speak up—what has happened?" ordered my father.

"The scullion has just told Ivan the chef that whilst he went out of the room for a moment, a peasant came in, threw something into one of the saucepans on the stove, and went out. Ivan looked everywhere and could find nothing, so served the soup. But suddenly it occurred to him that something might have been put in which had dissolved—that is why he ordered me to beg you not to touch it."

My father immediately gave orders that the peasant should be caught. We waited a long time without eating. At last they brought in a man, who knelt down on the threshold.

"He is a rapscallion," said my father. "I know him. He has often asked me for a favour of which I consider him unworthy. Confess what thou hast done."

"I have done," replied the peasant, sobbing, "what a woman who knows everything told me to do to soften thy heart."

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"Well," said my father angrily, "what wert thou to do to soften my heart?"

But it was some time before the peasant could make up his mind to continue.

"I was to go to the churchyard, dig up a corpse, and cut some of his hair——" Again he stopped.

"Go on," said my father.

"Cut this hair into very small pieces and make a pill of it with wax——"

"And throw it into my soup?" finished my father.

The prospect of eating such soup was not agreeable; but as we had escaped, the idea seemed to us so funny that we all laughed a great deal. Then my father told the peasant to get up and go home. To our question as to what he meant to do with the man, he answered, "I shall put him into the army."

At that time landed proprietors could get rid of dangerous characters by putting them into the hands of the Government, who used them as soldiers, and took them away—God knows where—so that they disappeared.

The second thing I remember is about a young bear which Philip, our then forester, brought in one day. The bear had grown up with us and become a great friend. He was always in our rooms, and he spoilt all the doors trying to open them when they were shut. I must confess that my father, more and more occupied with agricultural questions, did not pay much attention either to us or to the spoilt doors; and we took the opportunity, like the little rascals we were, of inventing all sorts of games with our bear, who had by this time grown quite big. The thing that made us laugh the most, and which I can remember to-day just as if I still saw it, was the following.

We tied a rope about 10 metres long to the bear, and at the other end we tied a cat. Then we put the two animals side by side in a little field near our home. The field was surrounded by garden hedges, and at the end of it was a little wooden shed.

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For some time they remained quiet. Then the bear went towards the cat. The cat did not move, but arched its back, and the bear, as if frightened, took some backward jumps. He did this several times, and each time his attitude of mock terror made us laugh. Suddenly the cat, which had had enough of it, took advantage of a moment when the bear was going backwards to bolt in the opposite direction. But the bear, feeling that something was pulling his tail, went off too. The cat was naturally pulled in the direction of the bigger animal, who scarcely felt it and who continually changed his direction.

After several journeys of this kind the bear stopped before the little wooden izba or shed, near which there was a great pond made by recent heavy rain. The cat seized the opportunity in the twinkling of an eye and climbed hastily on to the roof, where it sat down licking its paws. But that only lasted five minutes, for the bear started his headlong course again—and the cat fell off the roof into the water.

This time the bear went straight to the doorway of the house, which we had left open. The cat, seeing a little ventilating hole which opened on to a basement, fled in the same direction as the bear and got into the hole, but was immediately dragged out, for the bear went up the staircase. Finally, we were sorry for the cat and stopped the exhibition.

A celebrated French doctor at Moscow having said that we could not live, as our mother was tuberculous, my father had but one idea besides his agriculture, and that was to go abroad to consult doctors and to take advice as to how best to bring us up. In those days it was forbidden to take children under ten out of Russia. My father's petition to let us go had twice been refused, when Baron Lieven, my uncle's brother-in-law and general aide-de-camp to Nicholas I, made up his mind to put a third petition on the Emperor's table. Obviously Lieven would not have dared to do this had he not known how highly he stood in the Emperor's favour. When he saw

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this petition, however, the Emperor lost his temper, and cried out, "Let them go to the devil!"

So one day the great carriage was got ready and we left Gouslistchi. Never shall I forget the number of peasants and their wives who accompanied us, for they knew my father was going for several years. The carriage went at a foot's pace, surrounded by sad people, of whom many were crying. The reason of this was that the people saw in my father their defender, their protector, their friend, and the "Batiouchka" (Little Father), as the peasants used to call their proprietor, was no vain appellation in their mouths, but expressed in the main an idea dictated by its meaning. I should like to know if there has ever been a country anywhere in the world where the relations between master and serf were like those which existed under quantities of Russian proprietors; and if anywhere else there have been serfs who not only used the term "father," but its diminutive. I attribute these relations to a particular quality of the Russian character, and that is to its *bonhomie*. It is true that this good-nature is due to a certain extent to the faulty sides of that quality, of which the principal are indifference and indolence. It is because of indifference that revengefulness is rare in Russia, and even where it exists the individual is too lazy to make use of it.

Indifference and indolence are born in the Russian, and are further developed in him by the conditions in which he passes his existence and the struggles which he has to make against them.

In a country where the climate is detestable, where there are no roads, where postal communications take weeks and months, where doctors cannot get to their patients because of the long distances and the bad travelling, where even in the country towns the hospitals are very inferior, man has to develop in himself the capacity for being contented where other people would become exasperated, and for taking suffering philosophically, by saying to himself, "There, there, it doesn't matter.

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Nitchevo." But from one "Nitchevo" to another a man becomes indifferent. The nobles, the masters, who also lived under the same conditions, had become, like their peasants, indifferent and indolent. They lacked will-power, energy, and the spirit of enterprise. But this did not prevent, either on the one side or the other, the formation of sentiments which taken collectively created *bonhomie*. The more so that their joys and their sorrows mutually depended on conditions that affected both classes equally—that is to say, the atmospheric conditions which controlled the harvest. The peasant, less cultivated than the proprietor, was naturally feebler when it came to formulating his ideas, but, on the other hand, he was more expressive when the question of revealing them came up.

All this has naturally changed since the Emancipation, still more of course because the conditions of life in the country are to-day very different from what they were seventy-five years ago.

It rather surprises me that after these touching farewells I cannot remember anything about our journey to Dresden till I recall being left at the entrance of the first room in the Picture Gallery—children not being admitted—whilst my father went to look at the pictures. And yet the journey to Warsaw must have taken four days in a carriage, with post-horses changing at each station.

These post-stations were at that time often very important, and there were some which had as many as 150 horses. From Warsaw to Dresden there was already a railway.

At length we reached Geneva—of which I have kept many memories, for I was seven when we arrived there. We lived at the Eaux Vives, in a villa called "The Port" and which really had a landing-place. It was composed of two houses united by a covered passage and surrounded by a garden. We stayed there nearly two years with tutors—often odious—and often changed, but we liked one very much—a certain Monsieur Fabre, who remained with us till we went to Paris.

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They woke us up at six, put us into a large wooden tub, and poured cold water over us. Every day we had gymnastic lessons in a great hall in the town, under the direction of a certain Professor Linque. The hall, which used to be of wood, is replaced by a stone building erected on the same spot. We had a piano mistress, Mademoiselle Coulet, whom we liked very much, because she always took our part against the wicked tutors.

One day my father took us with him to Meiringen. We went by omnibus, for at that time there were no railways in all Switzerland, save a little bit between Zurich and a town near by. At Meiringen we established ourselves in a tiny pension frequented by German and Swiss landscape-painters. My father, who adored it, went out all day painting, and left us with the daughter of the proprietor, an excellent young woman called Magdalena Ruff, of about twenty, to whom we were devoted and who took care of us.

Then we went on to Paris, and I recollect the gymnastic school, and a dancing school kept by a M. Boisot; also my father's brother's pretty house at Maisons Laffitte. He was an original type, my uncle, and would have only evergreen trees in his garden, and for flowers, nothing but violets of every kind.

It was just then that Napoleon III's marriage was taking place, and my father hired a window from which we could see the procession.

I had a beautiful view of the Empress Eugénie sitting by the Emperor in the gilded coach, the windows of which were so enormous that one could distinctly see everything inside. She had a wonderful complexion. But the eyebrows were placed rather too high above the eyes, especially just near the nose. The two eyebrows therefore did not make a horizontal line, which, to my canons of taste, was the first rule of beauty. And I was nearly nine and a half!

Then I remember a fine apartment at Warsaw with a horrible tutor who had soon to be changed. We found

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out that going to Warsaw was a surprise for my father, who had had to alter all his plans. He had meant to take us on to Italy after Paris, and to go to Greece and Constantinople before going back to Russia, when suddenly he received an invitation from Mouhanoff, the then Minister of Public Instruction in Poland, who, knowing what an artist my father was, offered him the post of Director of the Academy of Fine Arts at Warsaw. My father, who was devoted to art, could not resist the temptation, and accepted.

Here he had much to do, and he went out a great deal into society, finding many acquaintances and relations in Warsaw, such as Madame Andrault (*née* Olénine) and Princess Paskévitch (*née* Gribojédoff). We children spent our time at war with the wicked tutors, from whom we put up with all sorts of treatment, provided they did not complain of us to our father, for then we were forbidden to go and play with other children with whom we had made friends. I well remember the face of one tutor, whose name was M. Rey, when, one day out walking in the street, he found out that all the nonsense we were talking about "the horrible scale" (we did not mention the scale of re, French for the scale of D minor) referred to him!! He would not walk with us any more, but crossed the road and went home alone.

It had taken him two weeks to make this discovery. M. Rey was a very strong Swiss; very often he would seize us by the collar and hit us with a stick.

One day we had had enough of this education with tutors, and asked our father to let us go into the Gymnasium, i.e. the boys' school. He consented, and we were given masters to prepare us, the elder ones for the first class, the youngest for the second.

These preparations lasted three months, for the lectures were given in Polish, a language we did not know. It was only after the revolution of 1868 that one began to Russify Poland and to introduce Russian everywhere. I have retained a very pleasant memory of the professors and

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of our companions, and I particularly remember a Professor of Chemistry, Sclodovsky, who may have been the father of Madame Curie, for she was Mademoiselle Sclodovska.

Besides the lessons at the Gymnasium, my father insisted that we should have music lessons, all three piano lessons, and violoncello for me and violin for my two brothers. To be ready for my 'cello lesson I had to get up at six and play from 6.30 to 7.30. Then I had breakfast, and at eight was at the Gymnasium. We went home at midday, dined at one, and from two to four were back at the Gymnasium. In the evening there was a piano lesson, and we also did preparation for next day. My brother and I were the only Russians in a class of fifty Poles. The Russian priest came twice a week between twelve and one to give all the Russian boys out of the seven classes a lesson in religion. In comparison with the Roman Catholic priest, the pope was of course an ignorant and rough type.

At that time corporal punishment was still in vogue. The class-master wrote his complaint of the pupil in a book kept for the purpose, and the Head ordered so many strokes to be given with a rod made of fine birch twigs. The punishment was given during school hours, so that the other boys should not see it, and a man was kept for the purpose. For less serious misdeeds boys were put under arrest between twelve and two. But for very grave misdemeanours a bench was carried into the class-room. The Head came and explained to the boys why the punishment was to be given, and the boy was thrashed before the whole class. It was a disgusting exhibition, and I could never understand how anyone could be got to undo his trousers and lie down on the bench without being absolutely made to do so.

At my father's house I saw architects, sculptors, and painters, and I used to listen to their talk on art, and sometimes see the examples they brought to show my father, with the greatest interest.

In 1857 my father suggested to my elder brother and

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myself that he would take us with him to Florence, if we would work up to get into the higher class when we came back to Warsaw. We promised, and started off for Italy with him and a M. Tautmann, a tutor who was to prepare us for the examination and give us piano lessons.

We arrived in Italy by Trieste in a carriage, but I do not remember where we took it. The splendid blue sea, which we saw from the plateau which dominates the town, made an immense impression on me. From Trieste to Venice we drove, and we stopped at the Hôtel Victoria, which is still there, whereas at that time not one of the hotels which are to-day on the Grand Canal existed.

At Florence my father installed us in a house at the corner of the Ponte della Trinità. He himself went off to visit various Italian towns. Very soon we were placed in a Swiss school entitled "The School for Fathers of Families," whose director, Monsieur Louis Grand, came from Neuchâtel. There were about thirty pupils, English, American, German, and Russian, but no Italians, except two Jews, for the school was Protestant. The Italian Government had only allowed it to be placed on the left side of the Arno, and in a position where it showed very little. It was in the days of the Tuscan Grand Dukes, and a Catholic could not go into a Protestant church without risking imprisonment. The school was excellent in every way.

Between the lesson hours the pupils rushed into the garden and fell upon the gymnastic apparatus of every kind, from the trapeze, with its cords and rings, horizontal ladders, etc., to the parallel bars, fixed bars, etc., which were all erected there. The children could stay there fifteen minutes and play as they liked, but besides that there were three gymnastic lessons a week under the direction of an expert. Without belonging to any particular class, the children continued their studies in whatever branch required, and had excellent professors.

Besides these lessons my brother and I had to learn the

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Orthodox Catechism. After dressing, we had to study it till eight o'clock, when we breakfasted. We each had a book of the Catechism, and worked in a small room whose sole furniture consisted of two cane-bottomed chairs, so that we should not have the temptation to go to sleep. Tautmann slept in the room next door, and got up later, but the absolute want of interest in the subject we had to study made us sleepy. As it was impossible to go to sleep on the chairs, we invented a process which succeeded admirably. We stood up, and one leant his head on the shoulder of the other. To-day it seems to me impossible that we should have been able to sleep like that without falling down—but, anyway, we did it.

My father had bought some splendid old furniture for nearly nothing, and there was such a lot of it that we had to send it by Leghorn to Dantzig, and then by the Vistula to Warsaw.

Tautmann adored the theatre, and it is needless to say that we did too. There were theatres in which to obtain a box one had to buy the key, and nothing amused us so much as to bargain to get the key cheap. When the man at the box office announced the price to us—every place being, of course, at a fixed price—and we considered the price too high, we went out into the street and waited till ten minutes after the piece had begun. Then one of us went back to the box office, and if the price was not lower we waited again. In this manner we often got a box for a very small sum.

Tautmann had to take us to the theatre with him because he did not dare to leave us alone. I recall seeing Ristori at the Cucumero Theatre, and I have always remembered her forehead, which was too receding; the rest I have forgotten. I had 'cello lessons from the first violoncellist at the Pagliano Theatre, a charming man and an excellent master, who, to my great joy, made me play amongst the musicians behind the altar of Santa Maria Novella to accompany a chorus.

Of boys of our own age I can only remember a Marquis

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Torrigiani. His father had married a Marchesa Paulucci, and the Russian Pauluccis were friends of our family. We were taken sometimes to a country house the Torrigianis had near Florence, but the only thing I remember about this boy was his astonishment at hearing that we already went to the theatre, whereas he was forbidden even to think about it till he was eighteen.

Back in Warsaw we got into the higher class, to the great joy of our father. Unhappily, he had soon to leave us to go to his estates at Pskoff. We were put to lodge with professors, the two elder ones with a Pole, and the youngest with a German, so that we might go on working at the school.

One day we received a message from our father begging us to come to him as soon as possible. It is easy to imagine our anxiety. All three of us, as well as the professors we lived with, were persuaded that he wished to see us before his death. We declared that we must start at once at any cost. The money that remained after the expenses of our professors had been paid was ninety roubles. We calculated that the journey to Pskoff in a "péréklodnoi"—a carriage without springs—would cost seventy-five roubles, counting a tip of a few kopeks to the postilion, and we decided to undertake the journey.

The vehicle used when one goes "péréklodnoi" is a cart of wood with four wheels, called in Russia a "téléga." At every station, when one changes horses one changes the cart too. There is room for two people, with very little space to stretch their legs, for a plank is nailed across the front to make a seat for the driver. When the traveller is alone, the carriage can be stuffed with straw to make up for the absence of springs, or else a sort of net of cords can be stretched to make a seat, and a cushion can be put on it. It is difficult to give any idea of the shaking that must be put up with, if, instead of the hay or the net, it is necessary to sit on a box. We had unhappily a wooden trunk which carried the few clothes

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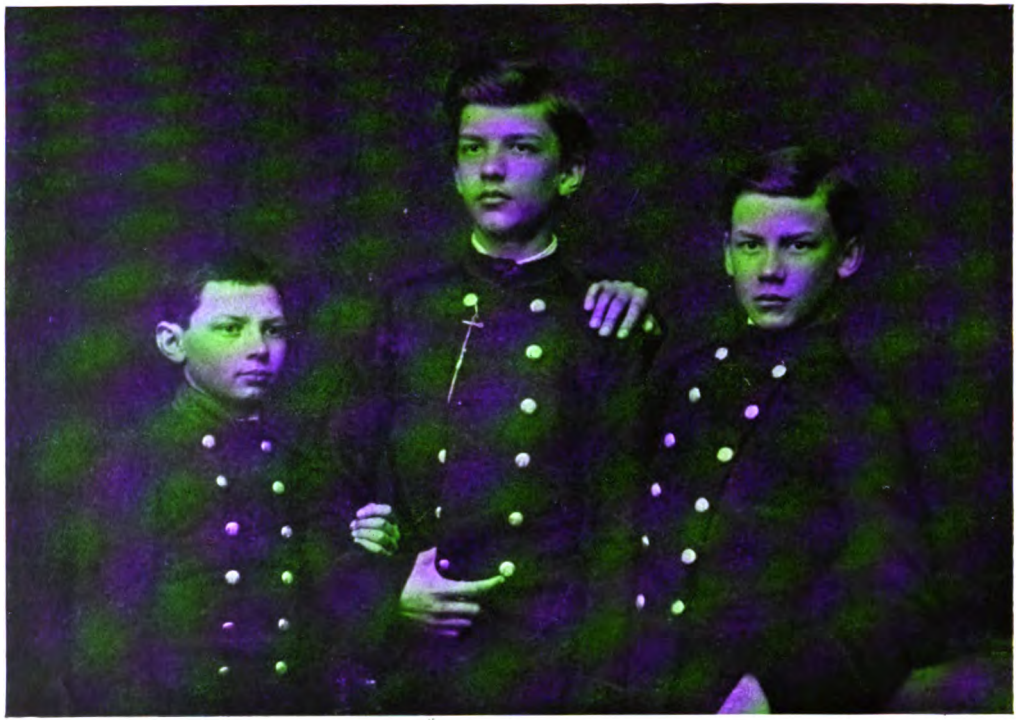

Constantine Stephen Alexander

MY BROTHERS AND MYSELF

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we had with us. As we all had to sit on this, one close to the other, we immediately felt the result, and I must confess that the idea of suffering this torment for a journey of eight or nine hundred kilometres frightened us; but there was nothing else to be done, and we made up our minds to arrive dead or alive—but to arrive.

The rate at which one travelled depended on the coachman, the state of the roads, and the condition the horses were in. Generally, one did about a dozen kilometres to the hour, but sometimes it would be twenty and sometimes only eight, because of the bad roads or tired horses. At the time we made this journey there was no railway between Pskoff and Warsaw; in consequence all the traffic between Petersburg and foreign parts was along that solitary road. It is easy to imagine the quantity of travellers who passed and the quantity of horses that had to be kept to meet their requirements. There were cases in which people had to wait their turn for half or even whole days. Such cases occurred generally when a Grand Duke or Duchess was passing with a numerous suite. To arrive at Pskoff in four days we had to drive day and night, even if we had the luck to make an average of twelve kilometres an hour, for it was necessary to subtract the time taken by the coachman to harness at every station, and the time lost in being unable to get horses that were ready or rested.

As we had but a few roubles with us beyond the money earmarked to pay for the horses, we could give only fifteen to twenty kopeks for tips, and had to be content with bread and milk, which we found at each station. Naturally the coachmen took us for children, and very poor children at that, with only a miserable wooden trunk as luggage, and who only gave miserable tips. So they did not take much trouble about our orders. When we told them to go faster or to hurry up with the harnessing, they either did not answer or pretended not to hear what we said. This exasperated us, but there was nothing to be done. All our energies were bent on getting forward as

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quickly as possible, and we invented a scheme for making the horses go faster, without the half-asleep driver ever finding out. He would have noticed had we beaten the horses with a stick, but we tied a pin to the end of a stick, and with this we pricked the beasts.

I must confess that the nights were not cheerful, for we often passed through places infested by bandits. But here our appearance of little paupers certainly protected us. There was no question of sleep for us two elder ones, sitting on the outside of the trunk, for it jutted out on either side of the cart, and if we shut our eyes for a moment, we risked falling under the wheels. But my small brother, sitting between us, could doze a little. How often they gave us horses that scarcely crawled, whilst our coachman slept sitting in the middle of the board that served for a box! How often our coachman replied so rudely when we made some innocent remark, that we had to keep silence! On the top of this our physical sufferings increased every day, and our bodies became stiffer.

Arrived at last at Kovno, four hundred versts from Warsaw, we were absolutely done, and the coachmen had to lift us in their arms to take us out of the cart. It was with the utmost difficulty that we managed to get into the next cart when it was time to go on. No one can imagine what we went through till, little by little, our bodies got used to the strain and we managed to get down from the cart without assistance. The fourth day we bore the journey fairly well, and when we arrived at Pskoff, in spite of four days and four nights without sleep, we felt relatively fresh. At the station of Pskoff we found our big four-seated carriage with the Gouslistchi coachman which my father had sent, for to get to him we had still 150 versts to go. We got into the carriage, telling the coachman to drive like mad, and to wake us when we got to our own estates. The journey took twenty-four hours, for the roads were bad and the horses had to be fed every fifty versts, and we slept hard the

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whole time. The coachman woke us as we told him, but we were immediately seized by the most distressing fears as to what was awaiting us at home. What was our astonishment when we suddenly saw a droshki with one horse coming to meet us, and in it my father looking very cheerful and well; he never knew what we went through, for we were in quite good spirits again and did not think any more of the miserable four days we had been through. My father, ignorant of all our trials, did not even trouble to explain his telegram, except to say that he wanted to see us very much indeed!

But the servants told us that the prospect of the emancipation of the serfs, a measure which would completely destroy all his plans for the bettering of his estates and the projects he had cherished for ten years, had so depressed him that he had prepared for death. He had written his will, had made his confession, had communicated (a thing he never did), and he had then sent the carriage and the telegram. But a neighbour who, by chance, had a Petersburg doctor staying with him, and who heard people talking of my father's state of health, came over to Gouslistchi bringing the doctor. The latter examined my father carefully, and came to the conclusion that his illness was nothing but an attack of neurasthenia, brought on by mental worries, and that he should immediately get up and not be alarmed about himself.

The next day we amused ourselves by going out riding, and I went into the different villages to see the few peasants I remembered. Everywhere they received me very well, although they had already heard talk of the new laws that the Government was contemplating. It was a real joy to see certain corners of the forest and certain places we had known as children, and we were blissful at being allowed to accompany my father in a victoria to superintend the work he was having done. He confessed to us, however, that he no longer took the interest in it which he used to do, for the new laws would

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change everything, and who could foresee how? We made visits to some of the neighbours, who were astonished to see us grown so tall. But my father did not wish us to remain in idleness, and made up his mind one day to carry us off to Dorpat, where we were to try to pass our exams. for the university.

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CHAPTER II

A MONTH later we were installed in Dorpat, that remarkable town of the Baltic Provinces, and our father with us. Here we quickly discovered that the most important subject for the University entrance examination was Latin, whereas in our Warsaw school, in the mathematical section, we had no Latin. So we had to do in a year what others do in seven years.

We took a Latin master, whose speciality was to cram boys, and for a year our life was spent, morning to evening, at Latin. My father had many acquaintances at Dorpat, but stayed mostly at home, for it was here that he began to suffer from gout. We young folk knew nobody, and did nothing but prepare oral and written lessons, so afraid were we that the examination would not be easy. We were told that after having passed the *viva voce*, the boys were assembled in a hall, where they had to write a theme in Latin on a subject which the Professor chose then and there. The Professor remained in the room, walking round all the time to see that nobody used a dictionary.

After a year and several months we presented a petition to be admitted to the exams. But as no boys were admitted under seventeen, I, being only sixteen and a half, had to present a second one, and to my great joy the permission to try for admission was accorded me. I still remember the title of the theme we were set in examination. It was " Naratio de Troya eversa."

All went well—or well enough—in the different subjects, and we passed. Once students, my father gave us a great deal of liberty, but was afraid at first to leave us there quite alone. He proposed that we should take a young

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man of twenty-two to twenty-three to live with us. This young man was called Peter Boborykine. He was studying medicine and agreed to the proposal. We got on splendidly with him, for he was a good fellow in every way. We had a cook, a housemaid, and a boy in livery, one of our serfs.

Our lodging was big and well furnished, and we got an excellent piano. The music lessons, piano, violoncello, and violin, went on with quite good German masters. As to my younger brother, my father arranged to have him brought up with Alexander, the eldest son of a family called Solloghoub, who were settled at Dorpat, for their children's education.

To repay us for the trouble we had taken, my father asked us what we would prefer were he to give us five hundred roubles each. We replied with one voice, "Return to Switzerland to the mountains." "Here is your money: go there at the beginning of the holidays. This money will suffice for a sojourn of four or five weeks," he replied.

The fascination Switzerland exercises over those who have once been there is amazing. Above all things, we wanted to revisit Geneva, the lake, the "pension" where we had stayed eight years before, and the people we had known. There I left my brother, who did not adore Nature as I did. I went first to Chamonix, climbed the Brevent, and with two French couples made the circuit of Mont Blanc by the Col du Bonhomme on foot. I reached Courmajeur and went down into the valley of Aosta. I forget my other expeditions, but I know that whilst climbing the St. Bernard I hurt my foot and had to put up there several days.

At that time there was still a mortuary where those who died at the Hospice and the dead bodies found in the snow by the famous dogs were deposited. The first thing I did on arriving was to go to see this mortuary. It was 10 p.m., and there was a bright, full moon. Some hundred yards from the Hospice was a low, long one-

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storied building with iron bars across the openings, without either windows or glass. These openings were scarcely three feet off the ground, so that one could see everything on the floor inside. Through a window opposite the one into which I was peering the moon illuminated all the interior with a gruesome light.

Soon I perceived three or four nearly fleshless bodies half sitting up. On some of the heads there was still plenty of hair. Near my window a woman, well preserved, with bent head, and long black hair, was kneeling. The ground was covered with minute fragments of bones of every kind. When I think of the impression this scene made on me, I cannot forgive myself for not having asked the charming father of the monastery to explain to me why they had not taken the trouble to lay the corpses out straight.

The great St. Bernard Hospice was then different from what it is to-day. Dinner was at eleven, and supper at five, to feed the travellers who passed the morning and evening. They were always fed free of charge. The twelve monks who lived there were never seen; the Superior alone received everyone and allotted the rooms to those who proposed to spend the night there—also gratuitously. The climate is terrible, so that the monks only remain there for twelve years.

I returned to Dorpat and started work. Being entered on the rolls of the Faculty of Physical Mathematics, I had to follow the obligatory classes included in my curriculum. The programmes were renowned at that time for the prolixity of their subjects. The whole day was taken up in listening to more or less interesting professors and in writing their remarks in different note-books, which we were obliged to carry about with us. Still, from this time onwards I began to be interested in those sciences appertaining to agrarian interests and agriculture. That is the reason why my favourite studies were physics, chemistry, and botanical physiology.

Now that we were freed from the nightmare of the

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entrance exams., I began to make the acquaintance of several Russian families who had foregathered in Dorpat for the winter.

In some cases it was the doctors who attracted them thither, and in some cases it was the pleasure of living in a cultivated town without having to spend the absurd sums which life in Petersburg entailed.

The most sought after family at that time was that of Prince Dondoukoff Korsakoff, who lived in a big house one kilometre from the town. The members of this large family who were present were the Prince, his wife, a woman of fifty or thereabouts, and three daughters, of whom the eldest, Olga and Nadine, were between twenty and twenty-two, and the youngest, Sophie, was about sixteen. A number of families and also students met constantly at the Dondoukoffs', who often gave dinners of about twelve persons. They were a very cheerful family, the girls extremely cultivated, and well up in everything that was happening in Russian literature. We had interminable discussions on Belinsky, Gogol, Pouchkine, the dramatist Ostrowsky, and others. On Saturdays we played all sorts of games and all had a very happy time. The Dondoukoffs made us promise that we would pass the summer holidays with them. They lived on an estate called Gloubokojé, situated in the Pskoff Government, and were old acquaintances of my father. They did not stay very long, but soon went away.

Countess Sophie Solloghoub, with whom my youngest brother lived, was a woman of thirty-nine, with three boys and three girls. The eldest boy was fourteen and the eldest girl thirteen. The Countess was the daughter of Count Michael Vielhorsky, that Mæcenas of Petersburg, devoted to music and musicians, at whose house just then could be heard the most marvellous quartette playing in the whole world. Count Solloghoub was a superficial man, a writer of a certain standing, which standing he owed to his novel *Tarantass*. He lived more at Petersburg than at Dorpat, was a sieve as regards money

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matters, and often left his wife and family in the most painful financial situations.

I soon became very intimate with the whole family, and, probably thanks to this, I avoided the temptations which beset the student fellowship in a town where, for Russians, outside the university lectures, life is totally without interest. Dorpat is a German university in which Russians have no place, unless they are willing to enter a corporation, for at Dorpat the students, with very few exceptions, belong to one corporation or another. The Livonians, the Esthonians, the men from Riga and Courland, of whom the university is principally composed, have nothing in common with the Slav character, and it is not to be wondered at that the Russians prefer remaining free. Two or three of our compatriots, of whom one became later on a celebrated doctor at Petersburg, were really workers; a dozen scarcely did any work at all; and the large majority of the forty Russians who were at Dorpat spent their time doing nothing, or in drinking themselves blind. Amongst them were several students sent away from their own parts of the world for political reasons who had permission to study at Dorpat and nowhere else.

The most serious occupation of the Russian students was to act plays, which they did very well. Any profit from these went to a student who himself played women's parts with extraordinary talent. He was the son of a poor priest and had great mathematical gifts. For these productions I soon became stage manager. I coached the actors and I sold tickets, when I was paying visits to those of the Baltic nobles who lived at Dorpat. They often acted Ostrowsky's plays, in which Boborykine distinguished himself as an actor.

The students of the four corporations fought each other with rapiers, but never unless there had been the provocation of an insult. It is true that the most insignificant reasons were often considered sufficient justification, and a mere phrase like "You look odd" would be enough to start a duel.

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The duels imposed by the will of the corporation (*Bestimmungs Mensur*), as in foreign universities, did not exist at Dorpat. Unlike the German duels, the head was not exposed to cuts, but the body. The head was protected by an immense casque, and the stomach by a big wadded belt. But the arms, the chest, and the back were exposed to rapier thrusts. The cut under the arm was most dangerous, and often mortal. So a weak fencer, fighting against a strong one, thought of nothing but saving himself from this particular stroke, and would scarcely lift his arm. The Russians and the Poles would only fight with pistols, but often, too, for quite futile reasons.

It was only owing to the cunning of the seconds that there were so few casualties amongst the pistol duels. They only allowed smooth-bore pistols, loaded with very little powder, and counted the moments during which alone it was permissible to fire, one, two, three, as quickly as possible, so as to minimise the danger.

The student Boborykine, who lived with us, used often to go to the Dondoukoffs, whilst they were still at Dorpat, and aroused great interest amongst these ladies by his literary opinions. He himself wrote all day long, and was very conceited about the value of his productions. Sometimes he asked me to read a page or two, but I could not admire them. However, I shall never forget my astonishment when one day he showed me a piece of paper pinned on to the wall of his room.

"Read," he said, "what stands there."

And I read: "Boborykine is greater than Ostrowsky!"

I have rarely seen in an intelligent man such excessive self-esteem. When we had spent a year together, he decided to go to Petersburg. On this occasion we gave a dinner, to which we asked all the students we knew—about a dozen. At the end of dinner he made a speech in which he complained that his comrades had shown no interest in his literary capabilities. As everyone was silent and the situation began to be painful, I took upon

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myself to say that I had no very great opinion of his talent.

"You have a good verbal memory, and you know how to copy scenes at which you have been present. But outside such scenes your characters are not alive, because you have not enough imagination to invent actions which would be typical of them. In a word, my dear Peter Dimitriévitch, you are the best of men, but you will never be a great writer because you aren't enough of an artist."

Boborykine was so convinced of his talents that he was not even annoyed with me. He became quite well known as a novelist: some people admired him, others thought him below criticism. I never read anything of his myself, but I know that many people were furious because of the way he invented his characters. He was supposed to describe his acquaintances—down to the most intimate detail—and then make them behave badly. Count Heyden, with whom Boborykine lived for some time at Petersburg, stopped all intercourse with him for this reason, and finished by saying one day to him, "You are a cad."

At Countess Solloghoub's I made the acquaintance of the celebrated violinist Becker. It was at the time he was travelling round with Nicholas Rubinstein. One cannot conceive of two natures more opposed to each other: Becker frail, delicate, sensitive; Rubinstein strong, gay, careless—liking to play the fool and to play cards all night. Becker confessed to me that he couldn't stand it, and that it was impossible to continue this musical tour.

But though it was true that their characters lacked harmony, the same could not be said of their music, as I soon found out when the two artists, anxious to make use of my piano, came to me to practise their next day's performance.

Their preparation consisted of a rehearsal of a duet which they had not yet fixed on; they were to go to

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the music-shop to choose it. They didn't care what the qualities of the piece were, as long as it was brilliant, for, from the opinion they had formed of the Dorpat public, they concluded that fireworks was what it liked best. So we went to Karow (the music-shop) and carried off an immense quantity of "brilliant" duets for violin and piano. For two hours the two masters read everything I put on their desks, and their choice fell, as far as I remember, on a fantaisie from *The Huguenots*, by Bertini. Their ensemble was extraordinary—never a fault, never a hesitation; one would have said that they had both played the music all their lives. Never shall I forget the careless ease with which they read.

Next day I went early in the morning to see Becker. He was still in bed, and I tried to make him get up, by taking hold, quite gently, of his wrist.

"For mercy's sake," he cried, "don't do that. Pressure on my wrist is quite enough to make me ruin my concert. I am not like that devil Rubinstein, who never touches the piano, and plays at cards all night."

The concert, however, was an immense success, and Rubinstein, in the Appassionata of Beethoven, carried the audience away. Nicholas's brother Antoine often told me he could not play it as well as Nicholas. In point of technique, I am willing to admit this; but technique is not everything, and not for nothing has the public who knows always rated Antoine higher than Nicholas.

Every corporation at Dorpat had its singing master, but the voices were generally mediocre and the songs weren't worth much. I managed to form a little choir by choosing the best voices out of each corporation, and very often this choir was asked to take part in concerts which professionals came to give at Dorpat. In those days it was usual for professionals to ask some amateurs to help with their concerts. How often did we sing the Pilgrim Chorus out of *Tannhäuser*!

The lease of my apartment having run out, I sent away my cook, housemaid, and boy, and started living as all

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A PART OF THE BEAUTIFUL WOODEN HOUSE, AT GLOUBOKOJÉ

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the other students did, in a small lodging, taking my meals at a restaurant. My brother having made friends with men I didn't care much for, we decided to live separately.

Besides my lectures, which I attended pretty regularly, I often went to see the Solloghoubs. Countess Sophie Solloghoub was the most high-minded woman, and the most utterly devoted to the education of her children that it was possible to find. Very cultivated, but little interested in what was happening in the world, she led the life of a recluse, striving only to be useful to her family. She was musical, sang charmingly, and painted well in water-colours. It was she who roused in me a love for intellectual work, interest in art, and a horror of idleness. If there is any good in me, it is to her I owe it.

The University term ended, and the holidays begun, I suggested to my elder brother that we should start for the Dondoukoffs. My younger brother was sent off to Warsaw to join the Hussar Regiment of the Grodno Guards as ensign, and we started on our journey.

The Dondoukoffs' property was called Gloubokojé, which means "deep," from a very deep lake, five kilometres in circumference, on the edge of which the buildings forming what in North Russia is called the Selo were grouped. On arrival, one was struck at once by the huge dimensions of all sorts of stores, the splendid stables, the vast coach-houses, the hot-houses, of which one, quite ridiculously large, was for pineapples alone. The kitchen-gardens also were astonishing in their vastness, and the one devoted to strawberry-beds was fantastic in size. After a long drive through a shady avenue, the porch of a very big building, remarkable for its originality, was reached. This seigneurial dwelling—what French people call a château—was built two or three hundred feet above the lake, on a height falling in a gentle slope to the water. Formed of three houses, which the necessities of daily life had gradually merged into one big one, it was, thanks to its bow windows, its balconies, and its different roofs,

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extremely picturesque. At a few yards' distance there was a stone house and a couple of hundred metres away a small wooden one, both destined to receive friends if they came in too great numbers to be put up in the principal building.

We were received with open arms by parents and children, who with their friends formed a large party. I do not remember any day when we were less than twenty at table, oftener thirty. Soon Boborykine arrived, and with his arrival long discussions on Russian writers and their works began—very instructive to us, who, brought up in Poland, knew nothing about them. Besides these discussions, the days passed in reading, in walks, drives, rides, boating on the lake, and swings on the giant stride, where the ladies of our party, sitting on the loops at the end of the ropes, were swung round by the men. In the evening we supped as Russians do, at ten, and when there was a moon we stayed singing on the lake in boats till midnight.

I went one day to M. Lvoff, who lived on a property about seventeen miles from Gloubokojé with his wife and her daughter. Lvoff was the brother of the celebrated composer of the Russian National Anthem and was a splendid violinist. Having spied a violoncello in the drawing-room, I said to him:

"What a pity there isn't a second violin, for we should be able to play one of Beethoven's trios. I feel sure you have the music."

"Yes, the trio is here, and the second violin too," he replied, "for Alexis, who waited at table, plays the fiddle." Alexis was a survival from one of the orchestras which used to exist amongst the Russian nobles, recruited from the children of serfs, who were sent to the towns to learn music.

So we started without delay, and no one who has not experienced it can imagine the joy felt on hearing, in the midst of the Russian forests, tones which recall the outer world.

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Three elder brothers of the family, alone or with their wives, came often to Gloubokojé, and on the Princess's birthday, the 22nd of July, friends came even from as far as Petersburg. We constructed a real theatre, for which I painted the scenery. A three-act play was written, and Baron Fréederiscksz, a boy of twenty, who was afterwards military agent in Paris, acted the part of Boris Godounoff, the hero of the piece. I cannot remember the other parts or who acted them, but I know that I was cast for the maid of the wife of Boris Godounoff, and that the old Princess helped me dress, for in those days women wore long drawers, and I had not the remotest idea how to put them on. One day three students arrived from Dorpat, and we gave balls, and even fancy-dress balls.

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CHAPTER III

On my return to Dorpat I resumed the study of the 'cello. During this time the Curator of the University had changed, and instead of one Bradke, Count Keyserling was appointed. He was a distinguished man, the friend of Humboldt, of Baer, and of the Grand Duchess Hélène, and his nomination liberated the teachers of Natural Science, who were smothered by the theologians, amongst whom a certain Professor von Oettinger, nicknamed "the little Pope," was the chief.

Amongst the most cultivated families that Russia possessed from 1840 to 1860 was one noted for its fine musical gifts, consisting of two brothers, Counts Vielhorsky, of whom one, called Michael, was married to a Princess Biron, and the other, Matthew, was a bachelor. Their palace at Petersburg, on the Place Michel, was well known for its generous hospitality, and the musicians who arrived in Petersburg from all countries were received with open arms.

The Vielhorskys spent at that time about 12,000 roubles (50,000 francs) a year upon music alone, and the finest quartettes heard anywhere were in their palace. Such men as Rubinstein, General Lvoff, Vieuxtemps, constantly played there; Paganini, who sometimes played with Lvoff, used to say that he had never heard a better violinist. He was only an amateur, and as in his day no soldier was allowed to wear civilian dress, he played in his uniform with huge epaulettes on the shoulders. Matthew Vielhorsky played the violoncello, and Vieuxtemps, I think, the viola. Everyone knows Michael Vielhorsky's connection with Beethoven and that the latter dedicated a trio to him.

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Count Matthew came often to see his niece Countess Solloghoub, his brother Michael's daughter. Whenever he came, I arranged quintets in my student's apartment, where he played first violoncello and I second.

After one of these evenings the Count told me that he was going to Petersburg without any hope of returning to Dorpat. His age, and a growth, which had appeared at the top of his back, behind the right arm, would probably prevent his travelling.

"Come and see me in Petersburg," he said, "and I will try to repay the musical pleasure that you have given me here."

It is needless to say that the first day I could get to Petersburg I rushed to the Place Michel to see charming Count Matthew. He lived on the second floor, surrounded by books, all sorts of editions of music, and by his five Stradivarius, celebrated all over the world, the rarest of which was a double bass.

"Give me the pleasure of your company to-morrow evening," he said. "That evening shall be yours, and I will try to keep the promise I made at Dorpat."

It is easy to imagine my excitement all next day, till the moment came when I was presented to five musicians, of whom I can only remember four. These four were Rubinstein, Weniawsky, the 'cellist Davydoff, and the pianist Dreyschock.

Vielhorsky put me into an armchair and installed himself at my side, declaring again that the evening was in my honour. I was then between seventeen and eighteen, so anyone can guess what an impression it made on me. Rubinstein was still young, fair-haired, magnificent in his ugliness, calm as a Jupiter at the piano. That was his nickname in Petersburg. Weniawsky tall, black, always smiling. Davydoff small and gloomy. What they played I can't remember, but I can still see Dreyschock standing by the piano and turning the pages for Rubinstein. Davydoff struck me, of course, as having great technical ability, but also by his dry playing.

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It is to this evening that I owe many agreeable days that I have had since in my life, but I only once again saw that splendid Count Matthew, and that was at a really agonising moment. It was during the Polish Revolution of 1860–3. By chance I found myself at Pskoff, staying with my father, who at that time was Grand Marshal of the Nobility of the Government of Pskoff,[1] and lived in an annexe of the palace of the Nobles. I do not remember whether Vielhorsky and my father were friends or merely acquaintances; but I see, as if it were to-day, the miserable face of the former, trying with the aid of my father to compose a telegram to the celebrated Mouravieff, the Governor-General of Lithuania, to whom the Emperor had given full power to suppress the revolution, and everybody knows *how* he suppressed it.

It appeared that Count Matthew, who was just starting for foreign parts, had received at Pskoff the news that two young Vielhorskys had been arrested in Lithuania as revolutionaries, and that they were to be shot. After the Partition of Poland, one branch of the Vielhorsky family had become completely Russian, and the Polish branches broke off all connection with that branch for reasons that one can easily understand. It is enough to mention that the father of the two Counts referred to had been Ambassador from Poland to the Empress Catherine II, and that he had not protested as he should have done against the partition of his country between Austria, Prussia, and Russia. I must acknowledge that I have never gone into the question, and that it did not interest me, but I know that my friend Michael Weniéwitinoff, to whom it had been suggested that he should change his name to Count Vielhorsky, because his mother, Madame Weniéwitinoff, was the daughter of Michael,

[1] Russia was divided into about fifty Governments, called Provinces. Each Province was divided into several Districts, and over each District there was a Marshal of the Nobility elected by the nobility of the district. The Marshal of the Nobility of the Province (who was called in French Grand-Maréchal) was elected by the nobility of the whole Province.

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refused this honour, explaining that his refusal was owing to the disapproval he felt for the part his ancestor had played in the matter. Although all connection between the Russian and Polish branches had ceased, I saw with my own eyes how frightfully upset poor Count Matthew was at the idea that relations—even distant ones—could be shot. I remember the quantity of rough drafts that were made before deciding to send Mouravieff the telegram begging him to put off the execution. No one who knew the ferocity of the latter could be surprised to realise that Vielhorsky had not the faintest hope of succeeding. However, I heard later on that, to his great joy, Mouravieff had waited until he arrived at Vilna and that he let off the young men.

The day after this memorable evening in Petersburg I went to Twer on the Moscow line. I knew that at Twer my mother's brother, Uncle Alexander Dmitrieff-Mamonoff lived, and I wanted to know him, in spite of my father's objection to my meeting my five uncles (my mother's brothers).

When I reached Twer, I was told that my uncle lived in his own house, and there I went; but instead of ringing at the principal entrance, which was at the front, I went into the court of the house by a small door. In the middle of this court I saw two people, one very short, dressed in a beautiful black dressing-gown and very elegant Morocco bedroom slippers, watching the other (who was big, fat, and very much taller) arranging something with bricks. Directly the dressing-gown gentleman saw me, he said:

"You are Alexander Wolkoff; you are like your mother. I am delighted to know you. Come to my arms."

After several embraces, "What are you doing there, my uncle?" I asked.

"We are trying to settle," he replied, "which of the two of us can lift up the most bricks with two fingers. You see, we place a brick on its edge and then we put

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two others standing perpendicularly on it. On those we put two again, and then we pass an arm round the bricks and take the bottom one with two fingers and see how many we can lift. My coachman is very strong, and that is why I am so interested."

Then he took me into his house and presented me to his wife and his brother Nicholas. The house was comfortable and spacious, and there were lots of servants and a nurse for the children. I stayed with them for two days. Neither of them had any other interest in life than hunting and card-playing, but Alexander was extremely clever at inventing and telling anecdotes. A dozen years afterwards, when on a journey between Odessa and Moscow, I met by chance the celebrated Gorbounoff, who told me that whenever he was short of stories he went to my Uncle Alexander, who was always ready to supply them.

From there I went to see my maternal grandmother, who was still alive. I found her on an estate belonging to the Dimianoff. She was a charming and most distinguished old lady—but very delicate; a widow with three daughters and five sons. Two of her daughters were at Court as Ladies of Honour to the Grand Duchess Hélène, and the third stayed at home with her mother.

The education of the boys, brought up by tutors, was pure comedy. They laughed at them and obliged them to do whatever they wanted, spending all their time on the giant stride or on their swings in the grounds. Very often they climbed on to the top of the swings and settled themselves there, while the unfortunate German master had to give his lesson from below.

Alexander and Michael, the twins, were perfect Hercules, and when they grew up their great amusement was to try to invent occasions for fighting with their fists, although boxing had not yet penetrated to Russia. The moment they saw a big coachman with red cheeks and big shoulders sitting quietly by his master's door—as often happened at Moscow—they immediately suggested

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that he should have a fight with them with fists. The eldest of the five brothers, Emmanuel, became more sensible as he grew older, but was a fantastic creature. As a young man he was an ardent Slavophile, and so pious that he communicated every day. Later on he married a charming person, and worked at painting, but after a journey to Italy he changed his interests and became a Marxist. During his absence the four brothers divided the family treasures, which they gave away to friends or sold. Wonderful portraits of their grandmother and their great-grandmother, by Levitsky or Lampi, were given to a lawyer, who sold them to dealers in antiques. Not one of these boys had the faintest respect for family relics. With the exception of Nicholas, they all died young, but they had had time to waste or destroy all their souvenirs.

The mother of my grandmother was a Narychkine and possessed the best existing portrait of Peter the Great, by Charles Moore. This portrait belonged to Nicholas; he sold it to his brother-in-law, General Iefimovitch, and the latter offered it to the Emperor Alexander II. Another brother, Michael, had a magnificent ikon with which Peter the Great had blessed his niece, Prascovia Ivanovna, when she married our ancestor Mamonoff, and on the back of this ikon, which was covered with precious stones, there was an inscription recording this fact. When Karakozoff attempted the life of the Emperor, Michael thought it might be a good idea to make a present of this ikon to the latter. Utterly uneducated as he was, he did not know how to start about it, and told his friend, a lawyer, to arrange the affair. The lawyer received a diamond ring, and he only a letter of thanks. But the most idiotic of the brothers was Hyppolyte, who, not pleased with his share of the miniatures, used them as targets, saying that he really had no need of this rubbish. Some of these portraits of ancestors were saved by my mother's sister, Sophie.

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The only excuse for the Mamonoffs is that certain circumstances had rather contributed to make them what they were. They knew that in all Russia they were the only Dmitrieff-Mamonoffs with the exception of their uncle, Count Mamonoff, one of the richest proprietors in Russia, who was said to be mad and was a ward of the Government of Moscow. There was an important lawsuit, which had lasted for years, going on between the Mamonoffs and other heirs, but the former, and all Moscow, thought there was no doubt that they would win. So the children from earliest years were convinced that they would become millionaires, and need neither work nor take service with the Government for a career. Moscow, in this respect, was different from Petersburg, where the children of the greatest nobles went into the Army or Civil Service with the intention of getting to Court. At Moscow, the mirage of the Court had far less influence with young people who, by their birth, had an assured social position. The Mamonoffs were a very ancient family. Their ancestors were Princes of Smolensk (descendants of Rurik), so as regards birth they could not be better placed. And did they not expect a fortune from one day to another? Therefore their whole minds were set on this event, which was perpetually kept before them. Beyond this, nothing interested them except any occasion when they could prove their superiority. Certain of them, having enormous physical strength, enjoyed showing it off, and were always ready for a chance to fight. What possible value could the image given to Peter the Great be to Michael in comparison with the riches which he was waiting for? But the pleasure of giving something to the Emperor made him feel generous, and he gave away something which he did not care a rap about and of which he was incapable of understanding the value. Hyppolyte shooting at family portraits was instigated by the same feeling: what could souvenirs matter in comparison to the fortune that was coming to them all, so long as he was amused and could prove that he was a good shot by destroying them?

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However, as time went on, opinions about the lawsuit began to alter. It was proved that the fortune came from the female side, and finally the Mamonoffs were beaten. The other side, however, knowing that the Mamonoffs had not any money, and wanting to have a settlement, proposed to do so by giving them one million roubles. The Mamonoffs consented, but of this million roubles, each of them only got 50,000, and the rest paid the lawyer's costs. I met this man by chance, and he told me a characteristic story. He was very intimate with the brothers Mamonoff —so much so that they called each other "thee" and "thou." When the lawsuit was over, Michael brought him a ring worth 8,000 roubles.

"'How can you give me such presents?' I said to him. 'You know that the lawsuit brought me one hundred thousand roubles (that is ten per cent. on the expected million), and I have twice as much as you, who have only received fifty thousand?'

"'Do you want your teeth knocked down your throat?' he answered; and I was obliged to take the ring."

There are people who may think that there is something splendid in this desire to give away things when one has scarcely anything oneself, but in this case it was not the wish to be kind to a person who had nothing; it was simply the pleasure of showing his social superiority. The great gentleman gives his lawyer a present, and when the lawyer dares to make a comment, replies, "Would you like a box on the ear, or shall I knock your teeth down your throat?"

On the whole I thoroughly understood why my father had always taken great care to let us know nothing of these scapegraces, who, with the exception of Emmanuel, had neither character nor culture nor worldly wisdom.

Before going back to Dorpat, I went to see my father at Gouslistchi, to tell him my experiences. During this time the great frosts began and, the ground being covered with snow, to my joy I was able to go on in a sledge. My father asked me to go and see a man called Novosiltzeff

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on his estate at Oustié, to ask him to buy some adjacent lands. It was bitterly cold; the road was horrible and the wind swept the snow away on one side to accumulate it on the other.

I reached Oustié about one o'clock in the morning. All the lights were out, but standing in the snow one could see several houses and policies and a great park with a quantity of hedges. I did not want to wake people up at this inconvenient hour, at the country house of a man I did not even know. At last a night watchman came towards me.

"Is your master at home?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; but he does not live here," he said pointing to a big house in front of me. "It is the mistress who lives here."

"And where does he live?"

"At the end of the policies you will find another house. He lives there."

"What? all alone?"

"All alone, and the mistress lives all alone here."

"Why do they do that?"

"I don't know—but that is what they do."

I told the coachman to drive on to the last house on the estate, and we arrived before a much more modest-looking abode. To my great joy, I saw a light in one of the windows. I told the coachman to get down and make a path through the snow, which covered everything, and to ring. Presently a decently dressed servant came down.

"Is your master asleep?"

"No, sir."

"Then go and tell him that the son of Nikolai Stepanovitch Wolkoff begs him to receive him."

After several minutes the servant came back and took my luggage and showed me in. On the top of the staircase a man with the manners of a great noble received me in the most cordial way and took me into a room, where he said we should be more comfortable. In the

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middle of the room was a table lit by two candles and covered with different-sized bottles, some of them empty. An enormous man of about fifty was standing by the table.

"This is our deacon," said M. Novosiltzeff. "Here you see us together, gossiping and discussing a thousand questions on the vicissitudes of human life, whilst we wet our words with the delicious nectar which men call 'vodka.' —I beg your pardon, but what is your name?"

"Alexander Nikolaevitch."

"Well, my dear Alexander Nikolaevitch, I am delighted to meet you and I cordially introduce our deacon. He is a queer creature, but can drink like four men; and you —you have been a student at the University. You know all about brandy, don't you?"

"No," I said, "I know very little about it. I am sorry—I do not want to be a kill-joy. Give me a bed; that is all I want."

I understood at once that I had before me an unhappy creature, for a man of his name and of his appearance would never have allowed himself to drink with an ignorant deacon, as they all were in those days, without being already an incorrigible drunkard.

"But at least sit down, my dear Alexander Nikolaevitch, and we will talk a little," said the deacon. "If you knew how frightfully learned our dear Nikolai Ivanovitch is!" he said, winking and drinking a great mouthful of vodka. "Oh, what a memory he has! He can say pages and pages of Gogol by heart. That is so, Nikolai Ivanovitch?"

"Yes, sometimes I can do it," said Novosiltzeff, "but not always."

We all sat down and then he began to recite. I pretended to listen, but really I was studying these two types. Novosiltzeff was a handsome man of forty-five, clean-shaved, with regular features, a pleasant, amiable, rather sweet expression, but vacant-looking. He was a man already vanquished and brutalised by drink. The

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deacon, a giant with his hair plaited in small plaits, had a large red face, with deep wrinkles, and heavy lips behind which were fine teeth. While Novosiltzeff was reciting, the deacon turned his eyes every now and then up to the ceiling with an expression of ecstasy, and then looked at me smilingly.

"Yes," suddenly said Novosiltzeff, stopping at the passage of Gogol he was reciting. "I know why that astonishes you, my father. It is because you have no memory at all yourself, indeed so much so that very often, I can assure you, I am ashamed of you."

"Nikolai Ivanovitch, your words are most insulting!" said the deacon in a very mortified tone.

"There is nothing to be offended about; the truth is never offensive. Now, look here, even at chureh during service I have heard you make mistakes."

"Mistakes during Mass," screamed the deacon, turning towards me. "Nikolai Ivanovitch is making a mistake. I swear to you that he is making a mistake, Alexander Nikolaevitch. What kind of opinion will you have of me?"

"Very well," answered Novosiltzeff, "I bet you that you are unable to say the Ektenià without making a mistake."

"I?" said the deacon.

"Yes—you try, and you will see."

The deacon took a sip of vodka and began, but after five or six verses he stopped.

"You see," said Novosiltzeff. "What did I say."

"But, Nikolai Ivanovitch, you should realise that what you are making me do is not a just test. At church I am not sitting when I say the Ektenià. No, you must be just, and this time you really are not just, dear Nikolai Ivanovitch," insisted the deacon in a reproachful tone, shaking his head and drinking more vodka.

"Very well. Get up. Stand up," replied Novosiltzeff coldly.

"Ah! standing up you will see something different."

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After seven or eight verses, the deacon stopped. "What the devil is the matter with me? What can be happening to me to-day?" he murmured.

"I told you so," said Novosiltzeff, in rather a sleepy voice.

"No, no, no; I cannot admit it," screamed the deacon. "It is not just. Listen, I know what is wrong. At church it is quite easy. Yes, it is quite easy. At church the choir replies to each verse, and here I am all by myself like a prisoner in the dock."

"If that is the only trouble," said Novosiltzeff, "we will say the responses, Alexander Nikolaevitch and I. Start away!"

The deacon looked resigned. He got up, turned towards the ikon which was hanging in a corner of the room under the ceiling, and began. At each verse we chanted in thirds, "Gospodi pomilui."

Novosiltzeff sang slowly and with a great deal of feeling. I was forced to do the same. The deacon, quite happy, went on with his prayers with so much ease that I was astonished when at the tenth verse he suddenly stopped.

"You see!" cried Novosiltzeff triumphantly—"you see!"

The deacon, completely out of countenance, sat down without being able to utter a word, wagging his head from side to side, throwing up his arms and then letting them fall on his knees. Novosiltzeff, who was already pretty far gone, looked at him mockingly and was silent.

"Dear, dear!" protested the deacon. "I don't know what has happened to me to-day."

"Isn't it the vodka that has rather got into your head?" said I, to console him. But drunkards never like to imagine that any of their weaknesses come through wine, and this idea did not please him, and as if to change the conversation he got up.

"Have you seen the pretty churches in the other room? Nikolai Ivanovitch, why don't you show them to Alexander Nikolaevitch?"

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Novosiltzeff got up and with rather shaky steps took me into the next room, where there were several models of churches measuring roughly half a yard, rudely constructed and each placed on pillars of about a yard in height. Each of these churches was lit from the inside by a small candle. It was evident that these candles could only have been lit just before I arrived, because otherwise they would have been consumed.

The deacon pushed me towards one of these churches, smiling and winking. "Look," said he.

In the interior of the church I saw a little photograph of Mademoiselle Sergueievskaia, a charming and attractive young person, who was the daughter of a man who had an estate about twenty miles from Oustié.

I suddenly had the impression that I was amongst drunkards who had become children, and I burst out laughing—so in order not to annoy my host I said, "Please forgive me, but my journey has tired me. May I ask for a bed?"

Novosiltzeff called his servant and took me to a bedroom, which, to my great astonishment, was clean and comfortable.

The next day I got up late, and Novosiltzeff was already waiting for me and taking coffee when I went down.

I told him the reason of my visit, and he confessed that he was absolutely penniless and therefore could not buy anything. I was told that the property belonged to his wife, who was formerly a Mlle Kojine, but that she could not stand life any longer with a drunkard and had turned him out of the house. Novosiltzeff belonged to a very distinguished family who were extremely well thought of in Petersburg and he was a Colonel in the Horse Guards, but had completely ruined himself by drink and now never left the country.

Leaving Oustié, I got to Pskoff the evening of the same day. To my great joy, the steamers were still going to Dorpat, so I had only one night at my father's, and the next day I was at home.

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In 1861 the University of Dorpat had about 700 students, of whom only about forty were Russians. Apart from the lectures they were attending, the Russians were obliged at this period to attend lectures on philosophy under an Orthodox priest (a pope). The priest, who was short, fat, and shiny, had an untidy beard. He was called Professor Alexéeff and he had to give several lectures a week, but he never appeared at the University for the hours that he was supposed to be there. He opened the door of the class-room, which was always empty, and then went peacefully home, quite pleased to receive 8,000 roubles a year as professor. I have never known a Russian student who had ever attended one of his lectures, and the thing seemed to everybody all the more natural because, with the exception of Russian literature, all the professors were Germans and Protestants, and did not look favourably on this Orthodox teaching within the walls of a German University.

One day the brilliant idea came to me to notify a dozen of my comrades to come together to read the book on Philosophy which the authorities had set for us, and thus to relieve the tedium of preparing ourselves for the examinations. We really had started with the firm intention of working seriously, but the arguments of a portion of this work seemed to us so puerile that we ended by shaking with laughter. I then suggested to my comrades that we should go together to one of the lectures which Alexéeff, having no students, never had occasion to deliver. Perhaps, thought I, following his lectures will be the simplest way of getting ready for the examination.

The next day we went to the class-room, sitting carefully as far apart from each other as we could so as to try to prevent making each other laugh. It is easy to imagine the astonishment and horror of the poor pope when, looking in at the door, he saw that the class-room was not empty. His astonished face and the expression in his eyes seemed to us so comic that we had much

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trouble to suppress our laughter, and certainly the position of Alexéeff was tragic. Taken unawares, he did not know the least how to start work, and he stood mumbling as if terrified, with wide-open eyes. Having never seen anyone in the class-room which was specially reserved for him, he did not want to let out, in the middle of the term, that he had not yet started his subject. After several minutes of hesitation he ended by pulling an exercise-book out of his pocket and stammering a few words, looking sometimes at the window and sometimes at his exercise-book.

This absurd episode, however, played an immense part in my life. Alexéeff, of course, found out that this exceptional audience had assembled at my lodgings and that it was I who had proposed to my comrades to go and listen to him and make him look ridiculous, as he imagined; but that was really not my intention. So he looked about for some way of revenging himself, and he soon found it in one of the rules for students then in force. This rule was that nobody could offer himself for examinations at the end of the year without proving that he had been at the lectures of the professor who had to examine him, and to make it easy to check this, each student had a little book in which the professors whose lectures the students had been attending during the year had to write the word "Attended." The word "Unattended" obliged the student to put off his examination until the following year. The professors, who rather objected to these formalities, always wrote "Attended" to everybody, and Alexéeff, of course, did so also.

At the end of the term I handed him my little book with the utmost coolness, and without thinking that my whole future was being decided. The pope took the little book and with a firm hand wrote a word. My astonishment and agony of mind can be easily understood when I opened the little book which he gave me back smiling, to find the word "Unattended," which meant that I must put off my examination for a whole year. This prospect

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exasperated me all the more because I did not know what else he might do to me during the course of the year. I began to reflect, and it struck me that it was absurd to study at Dorpat if one could, by paying the same money, go to Heidelberg University, where such idiocies as "Attended" or "Unattended" did not exist and where one did not need to study philosophy either with an ignorant pope or even with decently educated clergymen.

I longed for the summer holidays with impatience, because I was going to spend them with my dear friends at Gloubokojé. I found all the same people there, the same welcome, and the same Boborykine. I told Olga and Nadine my plans of expatriating myself and studying at Heidelberg instead of staying at Dorpat, and they, who knew Heidelberg and were very fond of it, approved of my project. We were no longer in the days when one had to make the journey from Pskoff to Warsaw in a carriage or in a cart, as we had had to do several years before. A railway had been made and the journey had become easy.

That summer, like the preceding one, we amused ourselves happily at Gloubokojé. Lots of friends came from Petersburg, and we had excursions on horseback and in a coach with six horses, four abreast and two in front, which held about fifteen people, almost every day. For the birthday of the Princess we arranged a magnificent illumination. We made five hundred lanterns with different coloured paper which we bought at Opotchka, a little town of the district about thirty miles off. More than two hundred peasant children put these lanterns round the lake and lit them at a given signal, during which time the ladies and gentlemen of the party rowed about singing, in two boats, lighted up by enormous fires made by two barrels of pitch put to float on the water.

We also went shooting wolves with trackers. The sportsmen—about a dozen of them—stood in line, and beside each one there was a lady sitting quietly on the

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moss. I did not see a single wolf, but several little wolves were killed; the older ones, being more cunning, bolted through the line of beaters.

An unexpected circumstance took me away from my friends sooner than I had anticipated.

My father, who had been for a long time in love with a girl of twenty-three, had ended by marrying her. Being fifty-five years old, he did not ask his children to the marriage, but had a very quiet ceremony amongst his wife's relations. He married the only daughter of General Samsonoff, whose wife was a Mlle Lvoff, sister of the General who composed the Russian National Hymn.

I was very anxious to see my father as soon as possible and to make the acquaintance of his young wife, also to explain to them how useless it was to stay at Dorpat when, without spending any more, I could study at Heidelberg. So I shortened my visit to Gloubokojé.

However, in spite of the very amiable welcome of my stepmother and the pains she had taken to arrange a comfortable room for me in the house set apart for the Marshal of the Nobility, in which my father was living, I did not stay long. My father was much surprised at my new plan, but ended by allowing me to go.

I left Pskoff to return to Dorpat, to stay a short time there before saying good-bye to my friends. At the end of August I left for abroad, by way of Warsaw, in the hope of seeing my brother Constantine, who, as one of the Hussars in the Grodno Guard, was fighting in the Polish Revolution of 1863.

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CHAPTER IV

THE journey was not very cheerful. Mouravieff was hanging revolutionaries at Vilna, and Count Berg was following his example at Warsaw, with this distinction, that the first, who was cruel but intelligent, had only hanged eleven, while the second, less cruel but less intelligent, had already topped his two hundred.

At the station in Warsaw I was struck by a sight which did not portend much good. Soldiers were undressing every human being who could be suspected of being armed; they even took off their chemises and drawers, and that in front of everybody.

The station in Warsaw was then at Praga and the bridge of the railway not yet built, so we could only get into the town by carriage, and no carriages could be found; some people waited for them for hours. I saw at once that it would be impossible to hunt for an hotel without knowing which was open or dangerous, so I resolved to spend the night at the station with an officer, a fellow-traveller, and we both lay down on a big table, taking care to put our revolvers near at hand. Our sleep was not particularly comfortable, for on the one hand we risked being taken for Polish revolutionaries by the Russian soldiers, and on the other hand of being assassinated by the Poles, who might take us for spies. Political assassination was very much the fashion at this moment, and a card was always put on the unfortunate victim, with the inscription "For Treason." I met later at Heidelberg a young Pole who was so clever at this particular form of sport that even his compatriots kept out of his way. He was believed to have assassinated thirty-two people without ever being caught by the

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Russian police, and rumour added that the French police, whom he had asked to find him employment, were so struck by his talent that they offered him a place at once! (Napoleon III was then reigning in France.)

The next morning my companion and I each took a carriage, and we went to the town to try to find a lodging. I do not remember the name of my hotel, but I went to the theatre that evening in the hopes of finding somebody I knew, and I did find a Colonel Hempel, whom I had seen dancing in the ballrooms of the nobility at Pskoff. Directly he saw me he came up to me to tell me that I had chosen a dangerous place where nobody's life was safe. He also told me that my brother was not in the town, as he had gone off with a military expedition against bands of insurgents who had hidden in the forests, and were therefore called *do lasu*—Polish for "in the forest." Hempel thought it was his duty—for my father's sake—to ask me to spend the night with him, telling me to leave the hotel instantly. I must own that the prospect of passing the night with a police officer did not very much commend itself to me, but the certainty of having nowhere to take refuge made me accept his proposition. I was surprised at the precautions which he had to take for his own personal safety, and in spite of the soldiers and the police protecting the house, he was careful to lock one door after the other of the rooms around his own, and then took me with him to spend the night.

As he was undressing, he told me the adventure to which he owed his place in the Warsaw Military Police. He arrived at Warsaw to look for employment and went to the Hôtel de l'Europe, an hotel which is still in existence and whose national cooking is of world-wide reputation.

The façade of this hotel looks on a big street, but one of the sides is on the Saxe Square, celebrated because of the military displays which used to take place there in the days of Prince Paskévitch. At the time I allude to, the watch was stationed just opposite. The day after his

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arrival, about five o'clock in the morning, just as he was shaving, Hempel heard a most frightful scream for help. Just as he was—in drawers and bedroom slippers—he rushed into the corridor, and had not gone ten steps when a bleeding, dying man fell into his arms. The corridors were empty at this time of day, so that the noise of doors opening and shutting with a bang showed Hempel the direction in which the assassin had gone. Hempel resolved to follow him and catch him, dead or alive. He hoped to bring the man down, and without dressing (so as not to lose an instant), he rushed to the road where the Guard was stationed, crying out to the soldiers and the officer over them immediately to surround the hotel without letting anyone out. Happily a soldier recognised Hempel, in spite of his unconventional costume, and the hotel was quickly surrounded. As quickly as possible Hempel then went to the restaurant to look at the people who were there. By this time it was six o'clock and at that early hour the restaurant was nearly empty, but the sharp eye of the Colonel soon noticed a man whose way of holding and reading his journal seemed to him suspicious. He went up to him and asked him a few questions, listened to his answers, and immediately became convinced that he had found the assassin. The individual was arrested, made to confess, tried, and condemned.

This episode having been reported to the Governor-General, he put Hempel over one of the most important departments of the town.

In this state, I cannot say that the town was attractive, and much the most reasonable thing would have been to leave it at once; but I was sorry to do this, as, apart from my brother, who for the moment was away, I had hoped to meet a number of Polish friends with whom I had been at school for five years. Although I was a Russian, I was very intimate with several of them and I really wanted to see them again; but although there were quite fifty of them in each class, I never had the

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chance of seeing one of them again except Senator Karnitsky, who was well known at Petersburg and was very intimate with my friends the Sabouroffs. He was finishing in the top class of the school (the 7th) when I went into the second.

Before leaving Warsaw I begged Hempel to give me official permission to carry a revolver. Safeguarded by this permission, I went as quickly as I could to get a ticket for the German frontier. I was just getting into my carriage when a soldier took me by the arm to carry me off into a corner of the waiting-room to undress me. "You cannot read," I said; "find an officer." So an officer came in, when I showed him my revolver and my permission. He saluted me, and I was allowed to get into the carriage—and it is easy to understand how very glad I was to do so, for my position in the middle of a crowd of Poles who had gathered round me was no longer tenable, as the possession of the revolver made me look like a spy protected by the police. The train consisted of several third-class and one second-class carriage, in which one compartment was reserved for travellers. This train was carrying officers and soldiers who were going off somewhere to hunt for rebels. I had scarcely sat down when I noticed that I was the only Russian amongst seven Poles, who all looked at me in a hostile manner, without even trying to hide it. It was very natural, too, for the costume that I was wearing looked very like the Polish national costume, which was strictly forbidden at this moment—a circumstance that I was unaware of. It was a caftan of blue cloth trimmed with fur, with a pair of wide trousers of the same stuff, high varnished boots, and a fur cap. Costume, revolver, and the salute of the officer could not have made me more suspect in the eyes of my travelling companions. So I thought the best thing to do would be to tranquillise them as quickly as I could about myself.

"Gentlemen," I said in Polish, "I am a student from Dorpat, going to Heidelberg to continue my studies.

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You see that I speak Polish just as you do, but the reason is a simple one. I was brought up at the public school of Warsaw before I went to the University at Dorpat, and to prove this to you I am quite ready to tell you the names of the professors who were at the school when I was, and even the names of my comrades." And without waiting for their reply I began a list, in the same breath, of fifty comrades.

Everybody then burst out laughing, and the eldest of the company—a gentleman of fifty to whom the others paid a great deal of respect—said :

" Sir, we take your word for it, and we are delighted to see a Russian who speaks our language so well."

Then followed a long conversation which I remember perfectly.

" What interests us particularly," said the older man, " is to know what the Russians—and particularly the Russian students—think about our revolution. You as a student can tell us this quite frankly."

" Russia," I replied, " is going through a phase of very liberal tendencies at this moment. She is liberating her serfs according to the laws proclaimed on February 17th, 1861. At the beginning of the revolution all cultivated people, especially students, were on your side, but it is just because they were for the liberty of the people that certain of your demands have made them change their minds. Everybody knows that in the Governments of Volhynia, Podolia, Kieff, Poltawa, Charkoff, only the nobles are Polish, while the people are Russians, and in spite of that, you want to seize these countries for yourselves. That is a grievous fault on the part of the heads of your revolution."

" Alas ! " replied the old gentleman, " I must confess you are right ; and these gentlemen "—pointing to his companions—" can tell you how many times in our meetings I have insisted on the necessity of not raising this question, but without any results."

And then I added :

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"What prevents our believing in the triumph of your cause, following the precedent of what happened last century, is that your chiefs, Mieroslawsky and Languevitch, are already quarrelling."

"Unfortunately," replied the old gentleman, again looking at his fellow-travellers sadly, "that is another truth from the mouth of a Russian."

Be it said that at that time there was no Ukraine question.

On both sides of the railway line the forests had been cut down four or five yards, so as to prevent the insurgents attacking the trains. All the windows except those in the doors were screwed up with wooden boards, which would not have helped much against the bullets of to-day. The train went very slowly, and the soldiers were all ready to spring out and defend themselves against the enemy or to pursue him. How long we took getting to the frontier, by which route we went, and at what station my amiable Polish friends left, I no longer remember, nor can I remember the journey from the frontier to Heidelberg. On the other hand, I have the most vivid remembrance of the chance to which I owe the lodging where I remained for a whole year.

On the first day of my arrival, I went over the town to find a comfortable, agreeable, and not too expensive room. As I was going down the Friedrichstrasse—which still exists—I saw through an iron gateway a modest-looking house surrounded by a little garden. An old gentleman with a velvet cap was walking about amongst the flowers. No card in the window and no sign led me to suppose that a room in the house was to let, but somehow I decided to ring at the door. The aged gentleman saw me and asked me what I wanted. "I want to know," I said, "if it would be possible to find a room in this charming house."

"No, sir," he replied; and as he saw that I remained sad and rather pensive without attempting to go away, he said very amiably, "Who are you?"

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"I am a Russian student, and I come to Heidelberg to go on with my studies at the University."

"What is your name, sir?" he asked.

"Alexander Wolkoff."

"Oh," he said, with a look of great surprise. "There is an economist, Matthew Wolkoff, a deep thinker and very well known. Are you by any chance his son?"

"No, sir; I am his nephew."

He bowed to me, took off his cap, and said, "This is my house, and you shall have the room you want."

Next day I went there. It would be difficult for me to express my happiness during the quiet year I spent in this simple, clean apartment, surrounded by green trees and flowers. The proprietor of the house was the celebrated Professor of Political Economy at the University of Heidelberg, Rau, who worked from morning to night in spite of his seventy-six years. I am in a position to know, as his laboratory was next my bedroom and I heard him every morning moving books, from eight o'clock onwards.

I do not remember what formalities I had to go through to get my name put down as a student, but the Rector of the University made me a little speech and shook hands with me.

Soon after my arrival at Heidelberg I was working at Chemistry under Bunsen, Physics under Kirchhoff, and Botany under Hofmeister, and in addition to these lectures, which occupied two or three hours a day, I was working in Bunsen's laboratory. In those days there was a Russian library at Heidelberg which consisted of a room containing few books but many papers, and there I made acquaintance with several compatriots who were staying at the University. The most remarkable of them was a certain Stoliétoff, a young man of twenty-one or twenty-two, who became later Professor of Physics at Moscow. His mathematical capacity and his knowledge of physics, in spite of his youth, astonished me and also Kirchhoff himself, under whom he was working.

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Golowine, the Minister of Public Instruction, conceived the brilliant idea of sending a number of young people to foreign parts, at the expense of the Russian Government, choosing of course the most creditable, to finish their studies under celebrated scientific men. It was then that people began to realise how little the Russian Universities were capable of attaining the goal they wished to attain. The enormous number of subjects which the student had to take—about twenty—during his four years of study, only led to very superficial knowledge, without any time for practical application of the subject. Thus, for instance, the historians were not taught how to look up subjects in the libraries, and the chemists did not know how to work in laboratories. Everybody knows the story of Humboldt, who, after having examined the programme of the School of Pages at Petersburg, declared that he was incapable of passing an examination for any single class in the School. It must be admitted that the German professors were generally well satisfied with their Russian pupils and that these, with few exceptions, did not waste their time. Back in Russia, and in possession of the "Chairs" which they had worked for abroad, they managed to introduce improvements into the Universities. Amongst the German Universities Heidelberg was the most in favour at this moment, and there were a great many Russian students there, who came from different parts of that immense Empire, and also from families belonging to every kind of social class. These students afforded a great variety of types, and it was from them that Tourguénieff studied his Bazaroff and his Nihilists. Rich and indolent students who thought more of their clothes than their books were the exception—but there were some—and what was my surprise when I heard that many of them lived at the expense of a student called Voiéjkoff, a rich landed proprietor who himself lived economically at Berlin to have the pleasure of helping other students.

The Schools in the German Universities, when com-

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plete, numbered four: Theology, Medicine, Jurisprudence, and Philosophy. This latter comprised all sciences which had to do with general knowledge—in consequence all the many branches of Natural Science, Historical Science, and Philological Science.

Bunsen's laboratory had at that time sixty places. Bunsen went round every day, and never failed to go up to any students who by their attention or their attitude seemed to want to speak to the Geheimrat. On these occasions smokers hastily hid their cigars behind a bottle, for Bunsen had a habit of putting his cigar down on the table of the student he was talking to, and, when he moved on, carrying off the cigar of his interlocutor. Unhappily Bunsen's cigars left much to be desired.

Everybody adored this learned man. We esteemed and admired him as a noble type of worker, so good and so affable; but his lectures were not brilliant, for he had no eloquence. In this respect he did not resemble Kirchhoff, whose diction was perfect and the clearness of whose demonstrations was remarkable. He knew, as no one else did, how to vary the intensity of his voice and the quickness of his language according to the difficulties his subject presented. Sometimes he spoke rapidly, and sometimes he slowed down so as to allow his audience to follow him.

Hofmeister's lectures were not absorbing. He was not eloquent either, and he was so shortsighted that he sometimes held a goose-quill in his hand instead of the plant he was supposed to be describing. But he was a mine of information, and the students respected him.

The most celebrated scientific men at that time—names which drew students from every country—were Helmholtz for Physiology, Friedreich for Medicine, and Von Wangerow for Law. In the laboratory, Schichkoff the Russian chemist and artillery teacher at the Academy of Petersburg was still remembered. It was to him that the examination of Orsini's famous bomb was entrusted, I don't know why. Schichkoff impressed everybody by the coolness with which he manipulated substances which

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at any moment might blow up the laboratory. On the whole they were not sorry to lose him.

During the day I attended lectures and in the evening I walked about the grounds of the Castle or sat down and listened to the music. I went to the theatre, or invited musicians to my rooms who, for a modest remuneration, would spend the evening playing quartettes. I had not yet given up the 'cello. The theatre at Heidelberg was in those days quite small and not very attractive, but the theatre at Mannheim, which was reached by railway in half an hour, had very justly a great name throughout Germany. It was in this theatre that Schiller's drama *The Robbers*, which he wrote at the age of seventeen, was given for the first time, and every time they performed it the old advertisements were put at the entrance to the theatre. But it was especially to opera that the Mannheim theatre owed its great reputation. The orchestra was remarkably good and had quite first-rate soloists. Becker, later on the founder of the celebrated Florentine quartette, was the first violin. I had already met him at Dorpat.

I spent the first year of my time at Heidelberg in a rather secluded way. I saw quantities of English women, very often great beauties, in the town, and I met compatriots in the Russian libraries, but always avoided all occasions of making acquaintances, and I cherished the longing for the end of the term to go to Russia and pass the summer at Gloubokojé with my dear friends the Dondoukoff Princesses. The lectures were scarcely over when I rushed back to the house, packed my bag, and went off by the first train to Pskoff, and learned with great sorrow that there was nobody at Gloubokojé and that they had all gone abroad. I was told that Princess Nadine had become so feeble that she could no longer walk, and that they had decided to take her abroad to make her see a celebrated doctor. The agent told me that the family had settled at Dresden in the Hôtel Belle Vue and was under a celebrated doctor called Walther.

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This news completely spoilt my holidays, and after a short visit to my father at Gouslistchi, I made up my mind to start off again and to join the Dondoukoffs at Dresden. I found Nadine in a terrible state of physical prostration. Her sister Olga and their excellent cousin, Mlle Jakovleff, looked after her night and day. Dr. Walther came every morning, and gave them all the impression of being a very remarkable man.

"I have nothing against your opinion," I declared, "but I do maintain that if one goes abroad to consult a specialist, one must search amongst the many excellent doctors for the best, and you must realise, my dear ladies, that in Germany all the best doctors are to be found in the University towns as professors. You must also admit that the Universities know better than the public the exact value of a scientific man. The Russians abroad have always had a habit of consulting inferior doctors who have been clever enough to make a name. Even the famous 'wonder-woman' at Munich has quantities of Russian patients who come abroad just to consult her."

Walther had decided that the Princess Nadine could not be taken to Blasewitz (which was quite close to Dresden) except by water, in a boat. The idea that this poor invalid was in the hands of a charlatan never left me.

"I am going to talk to the Prince," I said to the ladies.

"No, please don't; it is useless. We have already engaged our lodgings at Blasewitz."

"But I know a doctor whom all Germany honours, although he has not yet had time to make a name outside, and I should like to get him to see Nadine before they move her."

"We beg of you not to say anything to the Prince; there would be more fuss and endless plans. We have had enough of plans, dear Alexander Nikolaevitch. Please do not meddle in this affair." And as I was leaving the room, they seized me by my coat-tails, but I got away and went straight to the old Prince.

"Prince," I said, "there is even at this moment at

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Heidelberg a first-rate doctor whom all Germany would be proud to proclaim as first-class, whereas you have here a nobody whom Russians have put on a pedestal. You ought to know that in Germany the really first-class men are always called to the Universities, and at Dresden there is not a University. Please let me send this doctor to you from Heidelberg—he is called Friedreich. I know that sudden heavy expenses are irksome in these days, but I also know that the doctor I speak of, though very much appreciated by scientific men, is not yet well known to the public, and he might therefore possibly consent to come for a very modest fee. If you have confidence in me, I beg you to tell me the maximum sum that you are prepared to spend, should I find it possible to get him to come here."

"I have complete confidence in you," said the old Prince, "and I will go up to three hundred thalers."

"Very well," I said. "Good-bye. I will try to send you the doctor before you take your invalid to Blasewitz."

When they heard the result of my conversation with the Prince, the Princesses were exceedingly cross, all the more so as they said that the state of health of the invalid made it impossible that she could be moved except in a boat.

"We will see," I replied, as I said good-bye; and I went off by the first train.

This time my lodgings were with a law student, Hackel, whose acquaintance I had made on the journey. We had two rooms opening out of each other on the ground-floor of a house in the celebrated "Anlagen," now very shady but then with only quite young trees.

I went immediately to Friedreich and explained the reason of my visit.

"It is very difficult for me to leave home and go to Dresden at the moment," he said.

"I quite understand, Professor. All that I can tell you is that it is one of the best-known families in Russia,

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and that if you manage to save the invalid, your name is made."

"What is wrong with her?" he asked.

"General weakness which has lasted years."

"And who looks after her?"

"Doctor Walther."

"I accept your proposal and will start to-morrow," he said, directly he heard the name Walther.

"What is the family to pay you for your trouble?" I asked.

"Are they rich?"

"They were rich, but to-day affairs are rather in a bad way; so if I offer you two hundred thalers, would you accept it as the fee?"

"Yes, I accept."

Once arrived at Dresden, Friedreich stayed a week to study the invalid, and one day I received a telegram: "Find a lodging for the whole family. We start to-morrow and the invalid will come in a non-stop train."

I found a spacious lodging for them, and this was the beginning of the great reputation of Friedreich and of the fortunes of the Hôtel Victoria, where I had taken rooms for the Dondoukoffs.

All the family arrived, and the invalid, whom Walther had said could not be moved except in a boat, and even then no farther than Blasewitz, stood the journey perfectly in a train as far as Heidelberg.

Friedreich assured me that the invalid would get well, and after a year of care she was so recovered that she lived a long time, married, and reached old age.

From all countries people began to come to Heidelberg, but the Russian invalids exceeded the others. Everyone respected and admired Friedreich as a doctor, but they adored him as a man. On a certain day of the year all the invalids whom he had cured used to come to Heidelberg to do him honour, and the Heidelberg people used to say that they were dazzled on this great occasion by the beauty of the dresses worn.

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Soon after the family of the eldest brother, Prince Alexander Dondoukoff, arrived at the Hôtel Victoria. He had just left the Army and was at a loose end while waiting for a better chance of returning to it, and he did not have to wait long and was soon made Governor of Kieff. After Kieff, he was sent to Bulgaria, for which country he made a Constitution, and where he would have been elected reigning Prince if the Emperor Alexander II had allowed it. On his return to Russia he was named Viceroy of the Caucasus, where he remained until his death.

I was delighted to be with my friends, whom I loved as my mother and sisters; the old Princess even called me "Sacha." I always dined at table-d'hôte with the Dondoukoffs, and very often I spent my evenings with them. The Princess Nadine was kept in bed and did not leave it for a year, and Mlle Jakovleff, of whom I have already spoken, went on looking after her.

Sophie had married Count Heyden and stayed in Russia.[1] Princess Dondoukoff and her daughter Olga soon made acquaintance with several of the residents in Heidelberg, and it was thus that I became drawn into society. The only Russians there at this time were families coming from the Baltic provinces: three different Barons Wolff, Baron Uxcull and his wife, Baron Hahn and his wife, and another Baron Hahn, with two daughters; but there were lots of English families and the best known was that of Mrs. Gore with a great many children and a girl of

[1] Of all this numerous family only three are left: Nadine, the daughter of Woldemar, married to Iziédinoff, who has become Prince Dondoukoff, and their son. They are all in Paris working. Nadine is about sixty and lives at Versailles with the Franciscan Sisters. She embroiders all day long to earn the 18 francs a day which her room and her food cost her. In spite of this, she is cheerful and happy in having a son she adores, and who is also working somewhere in Paris. The husband is too old to work. To make Nadine, whom I love like my own daughter, laugh, I assure her that the day that the Bolsheviks disappear, and the Russians return back to their country, finding the conditions of life even more awful than they are to-day, her son will be the only person whose future is assured, for he will present himself amongst the Kalmucks, who will at once recognise him as their legitimate Prince.

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eighteen celebrated for her beauty. Every now and then there were balls at the Hôtel de l'Europe where one of the Barons Wolff—I think, Paul—was noted for his skill in conducting cotillons. All the English people admired him immensely and obeyed the orders which he gave with great precision and firmness and deference. I only remember two of my many partners: Miss Alice Gore, who became later on my wife, and a Baroness Wolff, who married Count Zeppelin. When I met her forty years later her husband was immersed in the difficulties of his great task and had already spent the greater part of his fortune in making constant improvements in the work, which was not yet finished. Countess Zeppelin and her daughter were devoted heart and soul to an enterprise on whose success at that moment hung many questions of problematical solution. I admired the ardour with which these two women faced the necessity of going on with the experiments even at the risk of their complete ruin. "We are ready to risk our last penny," they said. It is known that the Government paid back Count Zeppelin all he had spent when once his machine was accepted by the Minister of War.

We were always making excursions around Heidelberg, and soon the number of my acquaintances was so large that my work suffered. The truth of the matter was that there were many ladies and very few men, so that often I had to arrange excursions where I was alone with twelve ladies. The reason of this was that the German students who belonged to corporations, lived amongst these corporations, drinking, fighting, and keeping out of the women's sight. Even at the balls which were given at the hotels, there were scarcely ever any students belonging to any corporation. The dancers were almost always travellers, who with their families or alone were staying at Heidelberg.

I had happened to make friends with a little company of Russian students who comprised several very different types. One was called Pohl, who was learning Agriculture

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somewhere but spent his time at Heidelberg; Hackel, the law student, with whom I lived; Ditchesko, a Bessarabian; a Prince Troubetskoy who was slightly humpbacked—his former tutor, Maikoff, who had also been a student at Dorpat. Sometimes we went for walks together, and sometimes we drank together, but to tell the truth we were very sober and did not permit ourselves any excesses, except when we were drinking with the Saxo-Borussen Corporation, with whom we had amicable relations. One had to drink in the manner directed by the Beer-Commentary, which consisted of several precise rules whose observation prevents drunkards such as are met with in all kinds of Russian society, and even amongst the students. All the people "wine" more or less equally, and I do not know whether anyone has ever taken the trouble to translate the phrases which have to be exchanged on this occasion. One drinks to another's health, and he has to reply to the toast in drinking more mouthfuls of beer, and these "health" drinks and replies can be repeated indefinitely.

We often arranged to meet the Saxo-Borussen up at the Castle while the music was going on, and then the toasts started. Pohl was celebrated for the amount of liquor that he could swallow; he constantly saved us, because the Prussians were generally twelve or fifteen, whereas we were only five or six. I shall never forget his presence of mind one day when Troubetskoy was nearly under the table. It was one evening up at the Castle; we were sitting about twenty yards off the Saxo-Borussen table, and they began to drink our health. It was of course necessary to respond, and it went on pretty well except for Troubetskoy. The Prussians, who were always trying to get him over into their corporation, were seeking to flatter him by the number of toasts that they offered him and to which he had to reply. Sitting by Pohl, one could only see his head above the table-cloth. All of a sudden he said to Pohl, "I cannot drink any more. I am full. I am going to fall off the chair."

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Without wasting a moment, Pohl seized his head and shoved Troubetskoy under the table, and said, "Be sick!"

Only about thirty seconds passed before Troubetskoy was again capable of replying valiantly to the toasts which were being addressed to him, and for which he had to take fresh draughts of beer.

Soon the Prussians came up to us and declared that they had to stop the struggle, because they had still another engagement that evening.

During this time I could not get a place in the laboratory of Bunsen, but he was so kind that he let me work in his own private room. Roscoe,[1] at one time his pupil, had just sent him instruments prepared in England which served to determine the intensity of chemical rays after a system which the two of them had invented and elaborated at Heidelberg. In certain cases these instruments could serve as photometers, and as I was hunting for one for my work, Bunsen proposed to me to study those that Roscoe had sent him and to learn their use. For a whole week I gave up my time to this, and when I really knew the instruments I decided to employ them for a series of experiments which I wanted to make on the tower at the top of the "King's Chair," near Heidelberg. My intention was to determine the intensity of chemical light during a perfectly clear day without any clouds in the sky. To have my instruments at hand on the first favourable occasion, I had to leave them in a small restaurant which happened to be at the base of the tower, and I invited Pohl to come and help me. I wanted to take photographs every ten minutes, and it was impossible without the help of an intelligent assistant.

At the top of the tower was a little platform on which I could put a table to install my instruments, but to obtain the light from the whole of the sky it was necessary that nobody should be close to me at the moment when I took the photograph, for the figure of even one person would mask the light coming from one fraction of this

[1] Later Sir Henry Roscoe, Professor at Manchester.

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surface. It was therefore necessary to have an assistant capable of impressing the public who tried to come up to the top of the tower with the importance of the scientific experiments which were being made there. Pohl was created by nature for this part. Tall, adroit, elegant, with a sonorous voice and speaking beautiful German, he could not offend anyone, and would be able to manage the public.

At last one splendid morning Pohl and I climbed the Koenigstuhl, and after having carried up the table and camera to the top of the tower, we began our experiments. As I have already said, my plan was to take two photographs every ten minutes, of which one was to show the intensity of the chemical light from the whole of the sky, including the sun, and the other of the sky without the sun. To obtain this second photograph I had arranged a cardboard disc at the end of a long rod, by means of which one could intercept the rays of the sun while keeping the camera in the shade. This disc, about a foot in diameter, held at a distance of about 20 feet from the camera, did not diminish the surface of the sky by a millimetre.

At about ten o'clock tourists began to arrive, anxious to look at the panorama. Some of them stayed a few minutes and went away without having noticed anything unusual, but others went through terrible moments in listening to the wild stories which Pohl told them. Sometimes I had to make observations which required half a minute more, and at this moment someone wished to climb to the tower. Pohl, to retard their arrival, invented God knows what rubbish.

"Wait a minute," he shrieked to the individual whose head was now appearing up the stairs, "or there will be an explosion." Terrified, they waited until Pohl said they might come. He was always inventing something new. "Stop!" he cried to some people who were quite a long way off; "you don't know where you are coming to."

The people naturally stopped, and did not begin to climb again until they heard the sonorous laugh of the man who had stopped them.

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Once he made a group of travellers already half-way up go down. "Gentlemen," he cried—"gentlemen, go down; you have forgotten something."

It was thanks to his inventiveness that I was able to take the photographs exactly every ten minutes. The most difficult part of it was to persuade the people who wanted to stay too long at the top to go down. What Pohl managed to invent in this dilemma was astonishing, and it was always something one did not expect. No doubt it could not have occurred except in a University town where the public is accustomed to the eccentricities of youth and also ready to attribute them to the "juice of the grape." I think in any other place we should have been sent away by the police.

"Yes, the view is beautiful," he said to a couple who were staying on. "Yes, I am sure of it. So are you. But you must not exaggerate things, and I beg you, sir and madam, to content yourselves with the impressions you have already received and to go and seek even more beautiful ones."

The couple listened and at last got frightened. They certainly thought that it was a madman or a drunkard to whom they were speaking, and they hurried down without answering.

Another time, when Pohl saw that the moment of the experiment was coming on, and that three people were tranquilly staying on the terrace without thinking of going down, he said to them, "Now, gentlemen, if you want to stay, you must all go down on your knees, so as not to upset the scientific experiments which that gentleman is going to make." All three retired without a word. And in truth, with each experiment I did go on my knees, so that my head should not be above the camera; and Pohl, while he held the disc to shade me, put up his head just enough to be sure that the camera was in the shade.

Unfortunately, after two hours, the weather changed, and it was only on the 4th of October 1865 that I could get the photographs of the intensities of light for a whole day.

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The most interesting thing in these notes, was the great difference shown between the intensities at a very short distance of time. What could be the cause of this? It was certainly not in the chemical light of the spectrum —that is to say, in the blue and violet rays that we know —because their absorption at certain moments and their reappearance at others would certainly have been noticed in the effects of visible light, which in that case would sometimes have been redder and sometimes bluer or greener, while the curves which the modifications of visible light presented showed a remarkable regularity in the increase of intensity as in its decrease.

Therefore these enormous differences must have been either attributable to the ultra-violet rays which are invisible to the eye, or else to the negligence of the operator. I think that I can eliminate this last supposition, for I had studied the instrument long enough to be quite certain of it. The chart represented the curves of intensity for a whole day without clouds, and was published in the *Year-book of Botanical Knowledge* by Pringsheim for the year 1866, in the first part of the fifth volume.

Of course I allowed Pohl to entertain himself at my expense each time that I went up the Koenigstuhl. He drank good wine and ordered beef-steak and omelettes and enjoyed himself immensely. Before beginning work and after, I used to make caricatures in the visitors' book representing our work and the different episodes relating to the public who tried to get up the tower.

Stopping there twenty years later, the proprietor of the restaurant recognised me and brought me this book, which he kept as a relic. The little restaurant is now replaced by a big one, and when in 1922 I asked the proprietor if he had the visitors' book with the caricatures of fifty-eight years ago, he brought it to me straight away. It was the visitors' book, but somebody had cut out and carried off all the pictures, and I could only recognise it from my Russian signature, which was there still.

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CHAPTER V

Amongst the Russian students at Heidelberg there were many unattractive types and our little company tried to ignore them. There were even some who had begun to edit a paper whose title was enough in itself to characterise the literature one would find there. One of these papers had also a French title, and it was this: "I spit at everyone who comes."

There were, on the other hand, distinguished men with whom relations were agreeable and useful. I remember especially a law student, Duvernois, who was later on Professor at Odessa and Petersburg; Dr. Zavarykine, later on Professor at the Aeademy of Medicine at Petersburg; the occultist, Ivanoff, later Professor at Kieff; a Captain of Artillery, Louguinine, who became Professor of Physics at the University of Moscow at the end of his life; and several others.

One curious character was Serge Deroberti, who was equally remarkable for his great mathematical capacity and for his untidiness. His trousers were often innocent of buttons and were kept up by a bit of string. Our little company often had the pleasure of admiring him in his mathematical ecstasies. At this time he was living at the Hôtel Victoria in a room which was on the level of the ground, so that one could see what happened inside. Once we went out at night and passed through the garden, and spied Deroberti in front of a great blackboard writing mathematical formulas feverishly; barefooted, with only a shirt on him, he kept wiping out the wrong figures with his trousers. We stood watching him for a quarter of an hour and were unable to help admiring his devotion to mathematics, in spite of his ridiculous get-up.

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I suggested to Louguinine that he also should learn to manage Roscoe's instrument, so that we could try experiments from different altitudes on the mountains and in the plains. After two weeks of preparation, when he had mastered his machine, our conclusions were almost identical, so we agreed to meet in Switzerland, and I remember that the address he gave me was the Villa Oltramare at Geneva.

When I arrived at the villa, night had set in. The maid put me into a half-lit room, but not so dark that I could not recognise the portrait of a Russian rebel called Tchernicheffsky, on the wall, and below it a printing press, so I realised that I was in a revolutionary camp.

At the end of the room an open door led into a large, well-lit room, where I saw a pretty woman sitting near a table on which was a samovar surrounded by several glasses.

"Who is that lady?" I asked the maid.

"A Russian Princess," she said.

Directly this Princess saw me, she said, "You are Wolkoff?" The word "Mr." was considered unnecessary in this house, but I saw that they knew I was coming.

"Yes, madame."

"Will you have some tea?"

"Yes, madame."

"Sit down."

"Very well, madame."

She gave me a cup of tea, and there was no other conversation.

Soon there arrived a very unattractive lady whom I had noticed during my journey. The new arrival asked, with much interest, about the "Court," and the Princess told her a quantity of details which made them both laugh. I must admit that I could not understand what sort of Court could be alluded to in a town like Geneva. Presently I understood that it was thus the frequenters of the Villa Oltramare spoke of the society to be found at Herzen's—the famous Russian revolutionary who had

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left England after a long stay and had settled with his family at Geneva. They did not treat Herzen's establishment very gently, but the conversation interested me little and I took leave of the ladies by asking the Princess to have me shown to my room. Then I learned that the mistress of the pension was a Princess Golitzine who had married a Mr. Jakobi, who was away.

Next day they brought coffee to my room, and after dinner I went down into the room where the night before I had had tea. A number of people were already there—every sort of dirty, uncombed type, either miserable, destitute creatures or unhappy Russian rebels who had escaped from prison. While we were eating, two individuals arrived, who introduced themselves to Madame Jakobi by telling her that they had fled from some fortress or prison, whose name they gave her. We then made room for them and they ate with us.

I waited for Louguinine and was bored to tears, for it kept on raining and he only arrived on the third day in the middle of dinner.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing the whole party, "I have come from Interlaken, where I saw a very curious occurrence. The bandy-legged Dolgorouky met the Minister Golowine and saluted him, but Golowine did not answer, so Dolgorouky went up to him and said, 'You are a cad.'"

General approbation and joy appeared on all faces.

This episode seemed to me so ridiculous that I really could not let it pass.

Prince Dolgorouky, here referred to, was a well-known man, a kind of revolutionary. He was bandy-legged, and was distinguished from the other Dolgoroukys by being always called by that nickname.

"Gentlemen," I said, "it does not the least astonish me that Golowine should not have responded to the salute of Dolgorouky, nor that Dolgorouky insulted him. But what I cannot understand is why Dolgorouky should have gone out of his way to take off his hat to Golowine. Why

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did he do that? What was he trying to get out of Golowine? Why did he show this courtesy to the Minister?"

Everybody was silent, for they understood that I was not one of them.

All this time the rain never stopped, so that my plans with Louguinine could not be carried out.

That same evening I told Madame Jakobi that I was going the next morning and that I would like my bill. I must confess that it was a very modest one and everyone was very civil to me: they even asked me to join their society, but I refused, declaring that my convictions had nothing in common with theirs.

I do not know anything about the absent Jakobi, but amongst the revolutionaries who came and stayed at the Villa Oltramare was a very well-known, even celebrated man called Lavroff. I never saw him, and do not know what he was like. As for Louguinine, he was an artillery officer, an excellent man and an idealist. For some reason he was not allowed to live in Russia. In any case, he was a worker and did not lose his time. An honourable man, he of course found a means of getting back to his country. Afterwards I completely lost sight of him and only knew that he was very rich and very generous and that he had two daughters, one of whom married Prince Wolkonsky, the other Baron Meyendorff. At the end of his life he was, as I said, Professor of Physics at the University of Moscow. After Oltramare I only met him once during my whole life, and the encounter was unique of its kind because it was in a lift. I was going to see somebody at Montreux, he was going up to his own apartment, and we recognised each other, although we had not met for forty or fifty years. I went with him to his room and he showed me an instrument of physics upon which he was working. We spoke of the Russian Universities and of the students there. The Russians, he said, did nothing; only the Jews worked. I believe he died soon after this visit, and I never heard of him again.

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Back at Heidelberg, I again started work with all the more energy that I wanted to pass my examination for Doctor in Philosophy. However, I saw much of my friends, especially the Gores. By this time I had made acquaintance with the father, who arrived from Australia, where his family had property.

One day I had a telegram from Nicholas Rubinstein: "Will you be best man at the marriage of my brother, which will take place at Baden?"

So I wired "Yes," and left for Baden the day before the marriage, where I found Antoine Rubinstein and the family of the Tchekouanoffs, whose eldest daughter he was marrying.

The next day Nicholas Rubinstein arrived, and we spent three days together, of which I cannot recall very much; but I remember that Rubinstein shocked the company by appearing in church for the ceremony with a soft hat, and that his bride had pretty feet. "The seated father," as he was called—that is, the witness for the bethrothed couple—was Stolypine, the Russian Minister to the Court of the Grand Duke of Baden. The other best man was Vassiltchikoff, Secretary at the Embassy. There was a big dinner, at which I found myself next to Madame Viardot. Tourguénieff was not at Baden at that moment. Madame Viardot had become much better-looking since the last time I saw her, which was at Warsaw ten years before, when I myself was only ten. The reason for this astonishing fact, at her age, was that before this she had been disfigured by prominent teeth, but now had a false set.

We all went to the train to see the young people off. When the newly married couple had got into their carriage, Nicholas Rubinstein made them a little speech, which ended thus: "I never cry at funerals, because there one is only burying dead people, but I cry at weddings because at weddings it is living people who are buried." But he, they say, turned his wife out of doors after three months of marriage, so was soon resuscitated. The only one of

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the bride's family that I remember was the mother, whom I saw later on at Odessa, where, as an old woman, she had become mistress of the School for Girls of the Nobility.

Directly after, I left Baden to get back to Heidelberg.

Hackel woke me up one night at three o'clock, saying that he had something very serious to tell me.

"Since midnight," he said, "we have been walking up and down the Anlagen with the Saxo-Borussen, because the most idiotic, shameful, and horrible affair has occurred. We had a very good supper, laughed a good deal and drank a good deal, and then went to walk in the Castle grounds. It was a splendid evening, with a magnificent moon. The walk, which was rather long, made us very thirsty, and we could not drink as all the restaurants were shut at eleven. Somebody had the brilliant idea of going to the station, where the restaurant was open all night and where the beer is excellent; so we went down, and we found the beer so good that we all drank too much. Unfortunately we were not the only people who found it good; another lot came into the buffet with the same purpose. This consisted of about fifty Burschenschafter, an association which the corporations do not recognise, and with which, as you know, questions of honour cannot be fought out.

"Soon the beer produced its effect and men were insulting each other across the restaurant, and ended by saying the most horrible things. Seeing that there was nothing to be done, as honour could not be satisfied when dealing with people with whom one could not fight, the Saxo-Borussen decided to leave, and at this moment, while I am talking to you, they are walking up and down consulting how they can best wipe out the insults of the Burschenschafter. They all think that they cannot leave these insults without punishment, and that the only thing to do is to have a duel with pistols, but none of us know how these duels are arranged. They know, however, that you have studied at Dorpat, where pistols are the fashion, and

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they beg you to come and help them in this little affair. What am I to say ? "

" Tell them that I will do it," I replied, " on the condition that they obey me, because my responsibility will be pretty great. Tell them to choose you as second, go over and challenge the Burschenschafter, inviting them to name fifteen of their people to fight with ours."

At midday Hackel came back, telling me that all had been done as I said, and that the Burschenschafter only wanted to know the conditions of the duel, the place, day, and hour.

These were our conditions: Non-sighted pistols, the men twenty paces apart. The adversaries might shoot whenever they liked while the umpire was counting " one—two—three," which generally took four seconds. Anyone who shoots before the umpire has begun to count " one," or after " three," will risk death. Explain this well to the fifteen chosen. The meeting will take place at Schwalbennest, a little ruin above Neckarsteinach; the time will be eight o'clock sharp to-morrow morning. If they accept these conditions, do not lose any time. Go to your friends the Saxo-Borussen and tell them that they are to leave Heidelberg this instant and go to Neckarsteinach for the night."

The little town mentioned was in the Grand Duchy of Hessen, and was outside the police regulations of the Grand Duchy of Baden, as well as the Proctors of the University of Heidelberg. The charming little ruin called the Swallows' Nest is situated on a small hill. There is a pretty courtyard there covered with grass and surrounded by rather a high wall flanked with a little tower. It was an easy walk from Neckarsteinach.

At three o'clock that afternoon the Saxo-Borussens arrived in Neckarsteinach, Hackel and I with them. That night nobody went to bed, and we stayed in the rather poor restaurant which was at the entrance to the town. None of us were sleepy, and we tried to pass our time in one way or the other, but none of us wanted to

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talk. Some of them wrote letters—probably letters of farewell—and some of them sat and rubbed their foreheads, others walked up and down, some smoked one cigar after another. But all of them looked like men furious with themselves for having been idiots. As I was a little more used to the indifference with which pistol duels were conducted at Dorpat, I only thought of the decorative effect of the fifteen duels in the pretty ruin, and was not in the least anxious about the results. I had naturally made up my mind to charge the pistols with as little powder as possible and to count the famous "One—two—three" as quickly as possible—in fact I hoped to use all the tricks which the seconds know so well how to carry out at Dorpat, and which ensure, in spite of the enormous number of duels that are fought in the course of the year, that few people are killed. Also I was persuaded that at the first drop of blood shed, one word would suffice to settle the affair amicably.

At seven o'clock in the morning we took coffee—nobody drank beer—and they began to look anxiously towards the turn of the road where the enemy's carriages would first appear. From where we stood you could see the road for more than a kilometre. As the fatal hour approached, the young men were more or less nervous, but this nervousness was not in the least from fear. They were of the class of the "Junkers," and in Germany this class very rarely knows what fear is; but the idea of risking their lives in a stupid and useless row with people they did not know, and whose political ideas were foreign to them, made them very cross. Some of the students asked me to explain to them what we were to do in case the men who were challenged did not come to the hour.

"At Dorpat, we waited for thirty minutes," I said, "and that is what we shall do also. After thirty minutes have passed, there is no reason for waiting, because one does not fight with adversaries who cannot keep their word."

Eight o'clock struck; nobody on the road. What I

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was most afraid of was to see the challenged men arriving five or ten minutes after the hour, and to have to tell them that they were no longer worth fighting. It might have been just, but it would have been very painful.

Great was my joy when, at twenty minutes past eight, we saw no carriages but a man on a horse, galloping towards us.

"Gentlemen," I said to the students, "your reprieve has arrived. That man has no doubt come to tell you that your enemies were arrested as they were starting to come here. Whether they denounced you, or somebody else denounced them, we shall never know; but it is as certain as that you are here, that no doubt on the subject of this unchivalrous action can ever be raised against you."

Then everyone understood why I had asked them to leave Heidelberg as quickly as possible, and they thanked me.

The horseman had in fact brought a letter from the challenged men, in which they offered us their most humble excuses, blaming the Heidelberg police in not having let them start. Nobody had any right to suspect them of the sincerity of their excuses, but the fact was there.

The next day challengers and challenged were notified by the University authorities to come to the Rector, and they had to give their word of honour, at the risk of being sent down, to consider the affair as done with.

At the Gores' I had met an acquaintance, a Monsieur Brifault, a Frenchman who came to Heidelberg each year to spend some months there. He was a man of fifty, tall, going grey, with an aquiline nose and a rather serious aspect, carefully dressed and speaking German, English, and Italian. No one knew who he was, or what he was doing at Heidelberg, but all the town recognised him, as his photograph was in all the shop-windows, and he was often seen walking about the streets in company with the most distinguished people. All knew that he spent

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some months of the year in Rome, at Cardinal Antonelli's, some months at Heidelberg, and some months in England. They knew also that he spent whole nights writing letters and that he always seemed to have plenty of money, but since a Heidelberg man had seen him at the Tuileries walking, they said, arm-in-arm with Napoleon III, they began to look upon him as a political agent. On the other hand, he did not conceal his intention of studying and understanding the German people. One day when he had laid down some opinions, which I thought erroneous, on the subject of German students, I roused myself to say that he was far from comprehending them.

"But I am trying to understand them," he answered; "and if you will give me some help, I shall be very grateful to you. Where are you dining?"

"At the Hôtel Victoria," I replied.

"Will you let me join you?"

"Certainly."

"Very well, to-morrow I shall come and dine with you and I shall expect to learn a great deal."

So next day we dined together. I saw at once that he was quite frankly incapable of understanding the German character, in spite of the years which he had passed in studying it. *He* was convinced that he did understand it and that he had got hold of the most important traits.

"Well," he said, "I think that the German can think, reflect, and philosophise, but he is not a man of action."

And I replied, "I am of opinion that he gives you that impression, firstly, because you do not comprehend his real nature, and secondly, because he does not wish to give you another impression. Germans are disciplined; that is a trait of character which you have not studied enough, sir, and that is at the base of all that they do and intend doing. Taken in its entirety, the German nation in comparison with other nations is perhaps less brilliant, but, on the other hand, it is better educated, more methodical, and more thoughtful. The German is

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not prodigal of praise of his own merits and knows the truth of the proverb, 'Self-praise stinks.'

"The German listens very rightly to the opinions and criticisms of his own country, and instead of being offended if he is not flattered, he tries to see whether it is just or not." (The silly flag-wagging which one so often saw in other nations was then unknown to the Germans, who knew how to be patriotic without exaggerating the qualities of their own race.) "The people have learned to listen to those who know more than they, and the uneducated man does not get befogged in a fictitious atmosphere created and nourished by his own stupidity. What the Germans have learned to do better than other nations is to wait patiently, to calculate, and to prepare before acting. There no doubt is the secret of their enormous victories in the multiple sphere of human activities."

"But where are those victories?" interrupted Brifault. "In what domain do you find them?"

"In the domain of science, and all relating to it. The Germans have never shown so much creative capacity as during the last thirty years, nor have scientific men realised more their useful and important discoveries, nor have they ever enjoyed more the respect and admiration of the whole of Europe. The speculative spirit of the race is directed towards disinterested research on questions of pure science, which has created in the country an atmosphere of tolerance and sage liberalism which was before unknown."

We had such conversations every day, and at the end of a week we really could not go on with it, and to get rid of this charming gentleman but superficial critic, I said to him one day:

"Would you like me to give you an example which will prove to you very clearly what is the difference between the Germans and the French? You will admit that if you went to-day into a Parisian café full of students, and you began to criticise France, they would chuck you out."

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"Well, yes," he said, "I think they would."

"Very well. In fact I give you this example because the French intolerance has something morbid about it, and there are many instances in which I have observed it. If I should suggest to you now to come with me to a café and begin to criticise Germany and the Germans, do you know what would happen? One of these students would first see whether I was saying what I really thought, and whether there was any truth in it; and then they would begin to discuss for and against this opinion, because every student who goes to the University is made to develop opinions and knows that from the clash of conflicting opinions the spark of truth is struck."

"It is possible that the French are more virile and impetuous than the Germans," said Brifault, "and that the Germans are more amiable in hearing unpleasant opinions about their country; but then, again, the Germans are not men of action, and the action demanded in this case would be to kick out the impertinent people."

He would not come with me to the Students' Club and he stopped dining at the Hôtel Victoria.

That is the sort of man to which the French Government, desirous of knowing something about the character of a nation, confides the job. To appreciate the qualities of another country justly, surely the ABC of the business is to know whether one's own country under the same circumstances would have these qualities. It is only after comparison with what one observes at home and what one sees abroad that one can possibly arrive at any kind of judgment, and for that it is not enough to be a man of the world speaking languages. It takes men like Pasteur to understand how far disinterested effort of the mind in all its forms goes towards inducing a physical or scientific spirit into the whole community. I mean the spirit that submits everything to severe reasoning, condemns ignorance, and dissipates prejudice and error; and nobody understood better than he did how the German Universities, thanks to the favourable conditions for

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disinterested work, had become the centres from which their salutary influence radiated in every direction, developing amongst intellectual men logic and method, and amongst ordinary men confidence in their judgments. So there was nothing astonishing in the fact that people affirmed later on that the victor of France was neither Moltke nor William I nor his army, but the schoolmasters.

"They will sacrifice anything to the development of their country's agriculture and of its industry," said Pasteur in his brochure, *Why France did not find Sounder Men in its Hour of Peril.* "Whilst giving due weight to the practical application of science, this rival nation directed its greatest efforts and sacrifices towards the work of the mind at its highest and freest point, on the progress of science in its most disinterested form, to such an extent that when the name of Germany is mentioned, it practically means its Universities.

"This nation has understood that there is no such thing as applied science, but only the applications of science, and that the latter are only available by reason of the discoveries which nourish them; whereas the constant preoccupation of our statesmen of fifty, touching public instruction, has been principally primary and secondary teaching. They abandoned the higher walks of study and instruction, particularly in science, which had received such an impetus from its renovation in the eighteenth century. Elementary instruction can only produce happy results if it is animated by the breath of a great movement towards national learning."

It is also to the homogeneity of the spirit in all the Universities of Germany that one must attribute the spontaneous impulse with which in 1871 everyone realised the importance of the moment and saluted the proclamation of the Emperor with a like enthusiasm. It is true that many foreigners realised perfectly the danger of centralisation of power; but to those who pointed this out to the Germans the response was always the same: "We well know the deleterious effects of centralisation,

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and it is because we know it that we shall be able to evade its pernicious action."

These men were wrong; history, like nature, has also its unchangeable laws.

While admitting that at the period of which we are speaking there was in Germany a very superior scientific culture, it does not follow that the general culture of the country—that is to say, its intellectual and artistic culture—was superior to that of France, Belgium, England, Italy, or Switzerland, or, in short, of any of the civilised countries that had for a long time enjoyed liberty of conscience. But the Germans to-day claim this universal superiority (to which I would reply, without fear of being contradicted, that this was never recognised by anyone, and that there never was any question of it in those days). That is the reason why this term "culture," used stupidly and without any kind of perception, provoked an unfortunate *quid pro quo*. Many people have thought indeed that the whole of German culture, of which one spoke formerly with such respect, is responsible for the horrors which have latterly disturbed the soul of the civilised world.

This error should be corrected by remembering, firstly, that the superiority of German culture only applied to its scientific side, and, secondly, that after the foundation of the German Empire its superiority soon disappeared.

After Sadowa, in 1866, the French began to understand the Germans and became frightened.

In 1867 I went to England to marry Miss Gore, and stopped at Amiens station for five minutes. I went to the buffet, and whom did I see swallowing hot soup but Monsieur Brifault!

"After all," I cried, "are Germans men of action?" This question nearly choked him, for he swallowed his soup the wrong way.

Directly he could breathe again, he cried, "They are insolent brutes," and then ran for his train.

In 1872 I was with my wife in London, and we went

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by train to see her people, who were living in the country. I noticed in a carriage someone who was leaning against the window with his head tied up in a red bandana handkerchief. At that time one only saw this kind of handkerchief amongst snuff-takers in France and Russia. "I am sure," I said to my wife, "that that is Brifault."

Just then the train stopped at our station, and we got out, but I decided to knock at the bandana window, and it was indeed Monsieur Brifault, who looked ten years older. He only had time to open the window, stretch his arms out to us, and say, "My dear children," and off went the train.

Somewhere between 1889 and 1890 I was painting at Venice in a gondola, and suddenly a gondola coming from the station passed by me and I recognised Brifault in company with a poorly dressed old woman.

After dinner I went to the Square of St. Marco, certain that he would be there. So he was, and I went up to him. He knew me and shook hands, but I was sorry for him. What the sight of me must have recalled to him in the way of mistakes and misunderstandings on one side and foolish action on the other! We walked slowly from one end of the Square to the other and then we walked back, without being able to say a word. We then separated, shaking hands cordially. I did not go to look for him again in the Square, and do not know how much longer he stayed at Venice.

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CHAPTER VI

I MUST now go back to Heidelberg.

Is there anything in the world more enraging than an examination? That was the idea that for some time had been dominating every other in my mind. Is it possible to conceive of any falser, unjuster method, or of one more resembling a gamble?—and yet no one has ever discovered a more practical means of gauging the scientific knowledge of any individual wishing to acquire the prerogatives and kudos of a diploma.

These thoughts filled my mind in consequence of an examination which I had just been through to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In Germany the term "Doctor of Philosophy" comprises all the sciences of human knowledge, with the exception of theology, medicine, and jurisprudence. To obtain the honorary degree of Doctor, it is enough to have taken an examination in any three sciences belonging to this group. I had chosen chemistry, physics, and meteorology.

The examination took place in a hall where the professors were assembled. They all sat round a table and asked the aspirant to take his place amongst them. It is obvious that no more flattering invitation could be given, and at the same time no situation more likely to make an impressionable person nervous. I was nervous, and still am to an excessive degree. And the idea of being seated next celebrities such as Bunsen and Kirchhoff, the creators of the spectroscope and of astro-physics, who were to question me with their habitual kindness, sufficed of itself to make me nervous and confused. And it must not be forgotten that the examination to become a Doctor is not

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like those at school taken in passing from one class to the other. Nobody compels you to go in for the examination that confers on you the doctor's degree. It is your business to decide whether you know enough to be worthy of it, before you force these gentlemen to come and listen to you, and it looks as if you were trying to deceive them when you make mistakes. I remember that I waited with considerable anxiety for the questions that Bunsen would put to me. He knew that I had employed myself with chemistry as applied to agriculture, and he knew also that I was trying to make physiological experiments on the influence of light on chlorophyllum. All of a sudden he asked me what I knew about chrome. Now, chrome is one of the bodies which has nothing to do either with agriculture or physiology, so this question was exactly like a blow with a hammer. I have not the slightest idea what I replied or rather stammered, but I shall never forget the feeling of shame which overcame me as I sat opposite to these illustrious men. This feeling was so strong that I could not recollect any of the replies I made to Bunsen and Kirchhoff, and when I got home I had not the slightest idea whether I had passed or not. When later on I read on my diploma the words: "Examine rigoroso, multa cum laude superato" ("A rigorous examination passed with much praise"), I thought that my famous professors were very decent human beings.

I shall never understand why in this sort of an examination, when one wants to discover what a certain individual knows regarding any particular science, they do not just ask him to make an oral summary of it so as to get some idea of his general knowledge, opinions, and intelligence. There is no man so learned as not to be totally ignorant on some subject, and the examiner may just touch on that by pure ill-luck.

Soon after this I went to Pskoff to my father, who was still there as Marshal of the Nobility. Naturally he was very pleased with my success and interested in all my future plans, which consisted now in trying to obtain the

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degree of Russian "magister," as a foreign degree did not confer any special privileges in my country.

I remained a very short time at Pskoff, although there was a great deal going on there, thanks to the family of the Governor, Count Pahlen, and his wife, a charming Countess of the Baltic Provinces, and to my stepmother, who was at this time twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

In Russia the "doctors" of foreign universities have the prerogative of going in for the examination of "magister" without having to pass through the Schools, but to sit for this examination it was necessary to write a thesis by which the Faculty judged of one's attainments. So on my arrival at Dorpat I presented my diploma of Doctor and a thesis which I had already published abroad. This was accepted, and after three months of preparation I was allowed to take the examination, and having succeeded in publicly sustaining my thesis before the whole Faculty of Natural Science, I was given the diploma I wanted.

During the three months I stayed at Dorpat I went to see my former Russian comrades, but discovered only three of them: one of them was a doctor who worked very hard and was trying to pass his final examination; the two others, of whom one was Tchivileff, had become drunkards, lived in poverty, and were quite brandy-sodden.

The Russian students at Dorpat are incapable of living the life of the German students. When the Russian begins to drink, he at once becomes a drunkard; a German knows when to stop; the Russian is naturally lazy and has not the strength to overcome a habit. Of the forty-five Russians who in my day were studying at Dorpat, there were only five who finished their course.

From Dorpat I hurried back to Pskoff, so as to spend some time with my father and make plans for the future. Having studied in the Baltic Provinces and in Germany—where I saw how the German Barons managed the properties which they inherited from their ancestors—I could not help having sentiments of the profoundest antipathy for the

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way in which the Russian nobles behaved under similar conditions. Instead of thinking of the land when they inherited it, the one idea of the young generation was to make a career in Government service. The nobles, who, up till the time of the Emancipation (1861), were the only people who had the privilege of possessing landed property inhabited by serfs, very rarely thought of giving their sons the education necessary to teach them to administer the estates according to the most elementary principles of agriculture. And as, in Russia, farmers such as the class known in England and Germany were non-existent, the management of the fortunes obtained from land, with very rare exceptions, was in the hands of ignorant agents or unlettered Starosta. The income of proprietors became more and more uncertain, and it was not to be wondered at that people ended by looking upon the Civil Service not only as a means of gaining an honourable situation, but also as a method of acquiring well-paid jobs.

For a country as vast as Russia, what was necessary were men who were able to decide from well-based theories what would be the best methods to introduce so as to further her agriculture. I was so convinced of this truth that when I had finished my studies I longed ardently to be able to start them soon again and to devote myself entirely to science—thus responding to the appeal the celebrated Senebier made to scientific men at the end of his work on Vegetable Physiology: "I shall have accomplished my aim," he wrote, "if I can persuade physicists to study the phenomena of vegetation, and chemists to analyse more thoroughly the products of vegetation. If they will devote themselves to these researches, they will soon discover that there is no subject comprised in natural history which at the present moment offers a more extended career, which promises more success, or which will give them greater opportunities of being useful to their country, by providing them with the certainty of improving agriculture and the allied subjects."

What Senebier preached at the end of the eighteenth

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century to the learned men of the West—was just as applicable to learned Russians in the middle of the nineteenth.

I hoped to have a sufficient annual income to enable me to go back to Germany and to work in a laboratory specially appointed for Vegetable Physiology. But this of course depended on the condition of my father's affairs. If they were in a bad state, nothing was left for me but to go into Government service. I had not the slightest idea of what bureaucratic service meant, and I did not even know what were the duties of a beginner in this particular line. The young men who were trying to make careers for themselves made a depressing impression on me—for it would be impossible to find less talented or more calculating people than they were. The snobbishness of the Russian in a small Government post is the most disgusting of all snobbishness, but unless they have it, the vast mass of the employees do not get on. When they are old, they form the majority of the Russian Tchinovniks, ignorant fastidious people, caring for nothing except decorations which come to them by seniority, and which they covet, without explaining the reason for their desire. In their career these decorations did not even secure promotion, for very often men were put over their heads who had not got them, but who had influential supporters.

The sons of the nobles at that time could not take up any other means of livelihood than that offered by the Army or the Civil Service. They were exempt from conscription up to the year 1874. The idea of going into the business of a merchant or even a great financier was absolutely foreign to the cultivated nobility, for at that time—with very rare exceptions—even the most important business men could scarcely write, and were proud of it. I remember the impression which a certain Voniukoff used to make on me. He was a charming old man of sixty who used to come every year to buy the flax harvest at Gouslistchi. He would stand in the corner of the room whilst the business was being discussed, my father never even considering it necessary to ask him to sit down.

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He was a millionaire, but did not know how to write, and declared that he was not the least anxious for his sons to know more than how to sign their names. At Petersburg there were merchants, masters of a dozen vessels which were solely employed on their business, who did not know how to write. Everything was done by word of mouth between great and small business men, and the fact that these men did not want any change in their methods proves that in any case the larger number of them were men of their word. After the Emancipation this type of old merchants was replaced by that of their sons, who also could scarcely write, but showed themselves very apt to dissipate the fortunes their fathers had left to them.

Talking things over with my father, I soon understood that without having been to Petersburg it would be difficult for me to succeed in any of my projects.

Very soon after my arrival there, I was invited by the Grand Duchess Hélène to go to the Palace of Kameny Ostrow at ten o'clock in the evening, for her eyesight was bad and she did not receive visitors except at a time of day when the light is soft, as it is at Petersburg in summer at that hour.

I was very excited and nervous at the thought of being presented to the Grand Duchess. I knew the opinion that all Russia had of this Princess of Würtemberg, still a beautiful woman at fifty-five years of age and with a fine mind. She was the widow of the Grand Duke Michael, the brother of Alexander I and Nicholas I. She was the woman in whose honour Chateaubriand, Ambassador of France to Rome in 1829, had given a great party at the Villa Medici. I knew that the Grand Duchess Hélène had gathered round her all the most intelligent people in the country, and that nobody had helped so much as she the latent intellectual forces of all Russia, not only those which appeared in the Bureaucracy.[1]

[1] Leroy-Beaulieu has very well described this remarkable woman. "This Princess," he said, "who by her marriage had changed the modest and gay little Court of Stuttgart for the cold and sumptuous Imperial

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I had only just got back to Russia and really understood very little of what was happening. The country was passing through a crisis of exceptional gravity, such as had never happened before in the whole of Russian history. On the 17th of February 1861 the peasants were emancipated by a law which liberated them from servitude, at the same time assigning them lands which were taken from those of the proprietors and on which the peasants had always lived. This enormous work was not yet completed.

I naturally was very much afraid of showing my ignorance to a Princess who, thanks to the European breadth of her ideas, took a very serious interest in the progress of the work of emancipation. For other reasons I could not help being moved at the idea of seeing and talking to a person with whom my mother had spent several years as a lady-in-waiting, and for whom—as my father often said to me—she had had the most extreme devotion. My emotion was still greater because I knew how devoted the Grand Duchess had been to my mother.

I was taken to a room, where I found the Grand Duchess sitting with Baroness Rhaden, her secretary. Very quickly the conversation turned on scientific questions

Court, played a part at St. Petersburg, after the death of her husband in 1849 and still more after the death of her brother-in-law Nicholas. Well educated and serious, interested in all the influences of the spirit, she prided herself on knowing everything and understanding everything, all the more interested in encouraging art and science in that she dared not aspire to a direct political influence. Tired of the luxurious Court, living more seriously and peacefully at Petersburg than anywhere else, she had made of her house, the beautiful Palais Michel, a meeting-place for all artists, writers, highly-placed officials, and distinguished men of every kind.

"In the eighteenth century it would have been called a 'salon,' and naturally at the moment of the great impetus given to scientific ideas in the first years of the reign this royal drawing-room was the centre of all those who considered themselves 'Liberals.' Her glory was to be interested in everything which touched her adopted country. She did not even allow herself to be deterred by arid administrative details on legislation, political economy, or finance. And she entered these domains with firm steps under the direction of guides who put their knowledge or position at her disposal in return for her confidence in them as leaders."

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and principally on Helmholtz's work *Tonempfindung* (*The Perceptions of Tone*). The Grand Duchess astonished me by her great knowledge, and I ventured to express my admiration, at the same time asking how she had managed to acquire it. She replied that every time she travelled in Germany with Baroness Rhaden, her greatest pleasure was to meet celebrated professors, so as to gain knowledge in the same way as any other pupil.

Happily I was just then very well up in the questions treated of in the works of the great scientist whom I had known personally. I was only twenty-three at that time and knew little about Court etiquette. It was not likely that I should have acquired it at Heidelberg with my companions. Very soon—forgetting whom I had in front of me—my enthusiasm for scientific questions forced me to jump up from my chair and to walk up and down, speaking very loudly and gesticulating. I do not know how long this had gone on, when suddenly the Grand Duchess said, smiling: "Why don't you take my paw?"

For how long she had held her hand in the air without my having noticed it, I cannot say; I only know that, much ashamed, I kissed her hand in the most clumsy way.

"What are you doing at Petersburg?" she said, "and how do you spend your evenings?"

"I am not doing anything yet," I replied. "I do not know anybody and I do not see anybody, because all my people are in the country at this time of the year."

"Would you like to get into the Government service?" she asked.

"My father's means have been terribly hit by the Emancipation," I replied, "so there is not enough to allow me to devote myself to science as I should like, therefore I shall be obliged to ask for Government service."

"And what kind of career would you prefer?" she asked. "Would it be a diplomatic one, the Treasury, or the Civil Service—or what?" she went on.

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"What interests me the most is agriculture and everything to do with it."

"Very well, then, go to the Minister Zéleny and tell him that I sent you; and as you are alone, come and spend your evenings here. You will always find somebody in the drawing-room."

I bowed. . . . Then the Grand Duchess rose and I said good-bye as well as I could to the two gracious and learned ladies, and I went next day to the Minister.

It must be remembered that in Russia—the most agricultural country in the world—there was not even a Minister of Agriculture. The "Ministry" was merely a department of that of the Government lands. All the same, the Agricultural College, Petrovsko-Rasoumovsk, was already in existence at Moscow, and besides that there were two or three other agricultural institutions in the provinces.

The Minister was a retired Admiral, a kind of cross old sailor, who made me sit down and began to question me.

"Who are you, and where did you study?" he asked straight out.

"I have studied at Dorpat, where I took the degree of Magister in Agriculture, and at Heidelberg, where I took that of Doctor of Philosophy."

"What do you think about practical Schools for Agriculture?" he asked me.

"I think they are very necessary, sir," I replied, "but their usefulness will not be great unless the people who direct them have sound knowledge, founded on a scientific basis."

"What do you think of the College of Agriculture at Moscow?" he inquired.

I, who knew very well what the students were worth when they left the College—for their ignorance was known to everybody—preferred to avoid speaking frankly about it, and I began to explain my point of view on the way in which an agricultural college ought to be organised. It was in 1866–7 that the work of emancipation necessi-

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tated all sorts of new measures which had to be introduced to enable agriculture to surmount the difficulties consequent on the new conditions.

"I think, sir, that in a country as vast as Russia, with hardly any railways in existence, and with its many different climates, it is necessary to create a centre where men working in the manifold branches of agriculture (from the vine and wheat to flax and tobacco) could go for scientific instruction to professors who would lecture on agricultural chemistry and vegetable physiology. These professors could have laboratories to direct the work of the students of the upper classes, so as to prepare young people to understand, not only the practical side, but also to teach them to make scientific experiments or to be able to carry them out in different parts of the country. In this way, one could organise in Russia experimental stations like the celebrated Versuch Stationen (Experimental Stations) in Germany which have so contributed to the agricultural development of that country, because that development depends above all on the scientific knowledge of the men who direct these Stations.

The Admiral cut short my words. "I don't agree with a word you say," he said. "I am for practical things in everything and for everything, and I do not think that we shall understand each other."

I got up; we shook hands, and I left.

The next day I went to the Palace of the Grand Duchess and was shown into a drawing-room where every evening a little group of six or eight people came together. We had begun talking about all sorts of things when the Grand Duchess sent for me.

"Well?" she asked—"and your visit to Zéleny?"

"I fear, disastrous, Madame."

"Ah! I thought it would be so. Il est si bête, cet homme."

I bowed, thinking to myself, "Yes, he is stupid, but in an autocratic country is it really so difficult to get rid of these nonentities?"

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I took advantage of the permission to pass my evenings at the Kameny Ostrow Palace, but I do not remember many of the people; there were two young German Counts (Keyserlings) who were very popular, and an old Baron Brevern, who was very cultivated and amiable. Amongst the ladies—without counting Baroness Rhaden—I only remember a Mademoiselle de Stael, whose odd manners so displeased the Grand Duchess that Mademoiselle Rhaden had had to tell her to leave the Court, but for excellent reasons she preferred to ignore the hint and for another year continued to give everyone the benefit of her society, driving about the town in one of the Court carriages and making herself a laughing-stock.

I was told one day that the Grand Duchess was going to ask me to spend the summer with her, which proposition delighted as much as it scared me, for I did not know in what condition my father's finances were at the moment. To find out, I went to Elisavétino—an estate belonging to General Samsonoff, where my father and his wife happened to be at the moment. Very soon I made up my mind that our affairs were in a deplorable state. For the last three years the Gouslistchi peasants had stopped working and paid nothing at all. Nobody bought the forests or rented the fields. So the revenues were non-existent and all this at a moment when my father, in his position as Grand Marshal, was obliged to do the honours to the nobility of the whole Province. It was unfortunately probable that he would find it difficult to give me even the annual allowance which I had hitherto received whilst studying abroad.

Back at Pskoff, I remained there with my father for a time, more and more convinced of the dislike which I felt for the Bureaucratic Service. However, I saw quite clearly that unless something unexpected happened I should be forced to put a good face on the matter and put my name down for one of the Ministries. But the unexpected happened.

The Governor of the Province of Pskoff was a Count

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Constantine Pahlen, a charming man of forty who married Countess Toll, daughter of the General to whom my father in his youth had been aide-de-camp.

The relations between Pahlen and my father were most cordial, and this was lucky, for they often had to settle questions of service whose success depended on their good relations. One day Count Pahlen came to tell us what unpleasantness he had been through in the tour of inspection which he had been making, and how when he arrived at Sarokino, a big village 150 kilometres from Pskoff, he was struck by the very disrespectful manner of the people towards him. However, he did not want to go into the question until he had found out something about it from M. Moghélatoff, Arbiter of Peace[1] for the district to which Sarokino belonged. He was told that this gentleman had been there the day before and had not been able to tran-

[1] "The task of regulating the future relations between the proprietors and the peasantry was entrusted to local proprietors in each district, who were to be called Arbiters of the Peace (Mirovuié Posrédniki). . . . Their first duty was to explain the law, and to organise the new self-government of the peasantry. . . . . The Volost—a territorial administrative unit comprising several contiguous Communes — had to be created. . . . As soon as all the Volosts in his district had been organised, the Arbiter had to undertake the much more arduous task of regulating the agrarian relations between the proprietors and the Communes. . . . Many complained that the peasants showed themselves greedy and obstinate, stole wood from the forest, allowed their cattle to wander on the proprietor's fields, failed to fulfil their legal obligations, and broke their voluntary engagements. . . . The work of conciliating and regulating was thus extremely difficult, but the great majority of the Arbiters showed themselves equal to the task, and displayed an impartiality, tact, and patience beyond all praise. To them Russia is in great part indebted for the peaceful character of the Emancipation. Had they sacrificed the general good to the interests of their class, or had they habitually acted in that stern, administrative, military spirit, . . . the prophecies of the alarmists would, in all probability, have been realised, and the historian of the Emancipation would have had a terrible list of judicial massacres to record. Fortunately they played the part of mediators, as their name signified, rather than that of administrators in the bureaucratic sense of the term, and they were animated with a just and humane rather than a merely legal spirit. Instead of simply laying down the law, and ordering their decisions to be immediately executed, they were ever ready to spend hours in trying to conquer, by patient and laborious reasoning, the unjust claims of proprietors or the false conceptions and ignorant obstinacy of the peasants. It was a new spectacle for

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quillise the people, who had screamed, gesticulated, and attacked his carriage and pair of horses with such fury that the poor man was exceedingly frightened and went mad. "I had no other alternative," went on Count Pahlen, "but to go away with my subordinates, or to make a serious affair of it by sending for the soldiers. I preferred going away, in fact I had to bolt; the brutes simply turned me out. As Moghélatoff has gone mad, I cannot find out what it is all about. An Arbiter of Peace must be chosen at once to take his place and go there and make investigations."

As he spoke, Pahlen walked up and down the room, looking very worried. All of a sudden, he stopped in front of me. "You, young man—there is the chance for you; take advantage of it. You have studied at Dorpat, where the students are afraid of nothing. Do not lose any time; take a revolver, the chain and medal of the Arbiter of Peace which I shall give you, and go straight away to Sarokino. I will arrange the business of your election."

It is easy to understand the joy I felt at this proposition. To become Arbiter of Peace at a moment when the most distinguished men in Russia were trying to get the job was a piece of luck I could hardly have hoped for.

I knew perfectly what the duties of an Arbiter of Peace were, and I knew enough about the common people not to be afraid of them, but I could never have hoped to occupy a position which depended on the election by the nobility itself, and which, without the intervention of Count Pahlen, would not have been offered to me. For two reasons: firstly, because no one knew anything about me; and secondly, because my age was not one at which people generally choose an impartial judge.

"It is with the greatest joy I accept your proposal, Count; but to take up the position my father must give

Russia to see a public function filled by conscientious men who had their heart in their work, who sought neither promotion nor decorations, and who paid less attention to the punctilious observance of prescribed formalities than to the real objects in view."—(*Russia*, by Mackenzie Wallace, M.A., Vol. II.)

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me a small part of his estate—because an Arbiter of Peace must have his own estate, and I have nothing."

After a long discussion between my father and Pahlen (probably the first time they had been of different opinions), my father said he would give me the necessary estate, and I became an Arbiter of the Peace.

That very evening I sent a telegram to Sarokino, ordering an Assembly of the Peasants, and next day, wearing my chain of office, I started early, in order to arrive the same evening. Sixty people were waiting solemnly for me in front of the Volost. I said "How do you do?" to them, but nobody thought it necessary to reply to me, which was a bad sign. The person who interested me at the moment most was the Chief of the Volost, the "Starshinà." If this man had any character, he was responsible for the revolution of his subordinates who were directed by him; but if he was a slow and apathetic type of person, I was persuaded that he had done nothing in the matter and the reason of the disorders must be looked for elsewhere.

So I began to talk to the Starshinà, a man of about fifty, tall and well made. His bass voice was hoarse and he often spoke very loudly without any reason for raising it, as if to prove that he could do it when he wanted to. I asked him to explain the reason of the general unrest. I do not remember now what he said; but the way he replied led me to ask him a number of questions, so as to decide in my own mind whether his way of speaking was an effect of chance or a deliberately thought-out plan. I soon made up my mind as to the sort of influence this man must have amongst his equals. A peasant who in speaking to his chief in the presence of an Assembly of Peasants raises his voice from time to time is always a dangerous type, for he does it to show that he is not afraid of his superior, and this foolish arrogance impresses his comrades. He assumes an authority which the others are afraid of, and he takes advantage of his position to enrich himself in all sorts of ways, but the most easy way is by appropriating to himself sums of money which as

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Starshinà are deposited with him. A Starshinà of this type is always ready to exploit the peasants by exaggerating some entirely unimportant fact, to prove to them his zeal in looking after their interests, and to obscure the opinions of a few amongst them who have not an absolute confidence in his integrity.

At that time in each Volost there was a safe in which the money for the taxes was placed, and the Starshinà kept the key. Being convinced that I had to do with a robber who domineered over the others, I made up my mind not to try to do anything before I had unmasked him in the eyes of the peasants. I turned to the scribe of the Volost and told him to start immediately the work of making up the total of the sums which should be in the safe. Whilst the man was working, I watched the Starshinà. Great drops of sweat came out on his forehead. When the amount was made up, I ordered the safe to be opened. He opened it with a trembling hand—the money was short by 250 roubles!

"Your Starshinà is a thief," I said to the peasants who were around me. "Your money—the money for the taxes that you pay—he has taken it. I am sorry for you, but you will have to make up that money. As to the Starshinà, I turn him out of his post, and I shall have him prosecuted. You will have to elect another Starshinà."

The peasants were silent; every now and then one heard a great sigh, but the power of the Starshinà was broken. He stood there looking what he was, a brutal type of a man; not opening his mouth, but every now and then wiping the sweat off his forehead, with the sleeve of his caftan.

I dismissed the peasants and went to spend the night with one of the merchants in the village, who were always very glad to offer hospitality to the authorities.

That was my start in the post of Arbiter of Peace, which I held for four years. With one exception, I never had to employ force or to send for the soldiers, because

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whenever I saw a tendency to revolution amongst the people, I tried first of all to find out who was the leader. Once the leader was found and shown up, a joke generally sufficed to make my relations with the peasants not only possible but even agreeable.

I settled down on my father's property, to which I brought everything relating to Moghélatoff's office, and there, with the help of his secretary, whom I engaged, I began to examine the correspondence of the twelve Volosti the direction of which had been transferred to me.

Amongst the papers and summaries, there was one lot which struck me by its careful, laconic statements. This was sent in from Volost "M," and pleased me by a frankness which was always respectful. My secretary explained that the Starshinà of this Volost knew how to read and write, and that very often it was he who dictated the reports to his scribe. This Starshinà was a young man and had a wife and little boy. He had been fairly rich, but his present post was ruining him, for not having anyone to till his fields, they were not cultivated as they had been in the past. He had asked the peasants to relieve him of his job, but in vain. They gave him a very small salary, and it was in his own house that they had established the bureau of the Volost. Having discovered, after carefully going into the matter, that the salary of this Starshinà, in comparison with that of the Starshinàs of other Volosts, was very modest, I decided to raise this question at the first visit that I could make to Volost "M," and ordered the Starshinà to convoke the "Shod." [1]

I arrived on a rainy day, and the deputies—about sixty men—were waiting for me in an izba. The Starshinà came to meet me and saluted me respectfully, but without any servility or exaggerated humility. He took me to the izba and placed himself in the front row of the peasants.

"I have come to talk to you about your Starshinà," I said, addressing myself to the people. "To judge by the communications I have received from your Volost, I am

[1] Meeting.

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convinced that you have a model Starshinà. What do you think about it ? "

Several voices replied, " It is certain that we should have to look a long time to find another Siméon Ivanovitch."

" Does he do his duty as Starshinà ? " I continued.

" Certainly he does," replied almost everyone together.

" If that is so, my friends, I do not think *you* do your duty. You know that he is ruined; that his whole time is devoted to your affairs; that he has no time to think of his own; and in spite of this, the salary you give him is very small, although your Volost is one of the largest. I know that the law allows you to behave like this, and that is why I do not order you to do anything more, but I beg you to raise his salary."

The peasants were all silent. " Will your Excellency allow me to say a few words ? " said the Starshinà in a very quiet voice.

" Speak ! "

" I thank the Arbiter of Peace," he continued, addressing the peasants, " for speaking thus in my favour and for his wish to come to my help." Then, pointing to the ceiling of the izba, " My house," he said, and, indicating the buildings visible from the windows, " my buildings ! Burn them if you like, but know once for all that any money you give me to raise my salary will not make me any more indulgent to evil-doers."

Everyone was silent. I was lost in admiration of this wonderful specimen of a man who put his duty, as he understood it, above all personal questions. Everyone knows how the people refrain in Russia from speaking of fire, how terrified they are of what they call " the red cock." And now here was the Starshinà speaking of it in connection with his own homestead and even throwing down the gauntlet to criminals. I left the Volost profoundly impressed by this little speech. Demosthenes could not have spoken better or in fewer words.

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The peasants agreed to my suggestion and his salary was sensibly augmented. I soon found out that the words which had shown me the soul of the man were always translated into action. Never during the two years that he still served had I to make the slightest reproach. His devotion to the law was so extraordinary that all those who were in the habit of resisting it had an extremely unpleasant experience.

The tremendous change which the Emancipation produced in the relations between the peasants and the other classes left undecided a number of practical questions, and the peasants often had to play the rôle of the scapegoat.

For example, one day some surveyors arrived in the Volost of Karamycheff to measure the land. Sent by the head man in Petersburg, these agents thought that they would find a dozen peasants all ready to help them with their work. But Karamycheff, knowing that the work of surveying, which raised certain questions between the proprietors and the peasants, was generally done by surveyors appointed from the district and known to everyone, steadily refused to give the necessary labour. "Will you tell me what law," he said to the surveyors, "gives you the right to ask such a thing?"

The surveyors had to go back to Petersburg without having done anything, and the journey backwards and forwards took them two days.

The distances between the offices of my twelve Volosti and my own home were so great that it took me three weeks to make a tour of inspection so as to see for myself how they were working and what sort of people their Starshinàs were. These latter were generally gentlemen of indolent nature, as the peasants preferred choosing those who did not give any trouble. The foregoing incident showed me that the Volost of Karamycheff was a great exception, as the Starshinàs were usually completely in the hands of their scribes, always more or less drunk, who were clever at concealing the affairs of the district when

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it was necessary to hide some illegal action. I had to show much energy and skill before I could establish good administration in these offices, on the working of which I could rely.

Whenever one wants to discover the opinion of the majority, the great difficulty is the cunning of the peasants, for they always have something at the back of their minds, even while they are expressing a certain opinion with all apparent signs of satisfaction and general joy. I soon introduced the system of the ballot. To this end I put a table against a chair which was up to the wall, and on the table I put another chair, and under this chair a big bowl. Three sides of the chair was covered by a sheet. Everyone was given a potato which he had to put into the bowl to imply "Yes," and on the table to signify "No." The person who sat in the chair against the wall could see and control the actions of each man.

Very often the peasants begged me to take the chair, as they were afraid that if one of their number sat there he would take the potatoes from the table and put them into the bowl, and vice-versa.

Understanding that I desired to know the general opinion, the peasants had complete confidence in me, but tried to hide their opinions from each other. This enabled me to see how far cunning went amongst these indolent men.

Sometimes when I was presiding at the election of a Starshinà or a judge I had a real difficulty in keeping my countenance, so curious were the different remarks they made when they deposited their potatoes. Very often, after having made two or three signs of the cross, the peasant would make a little laudatory speech in favour of the one presumed to be chosen, and he made his remarks with such conviction and in a tone of such sincerity that when I saw him give his potato to the opposite candidate, I could scarcely help laughing.

It is easy for an Arbiter of Peace to reach decisions by

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merely speaking to the peasants thus: "Well, my friends, I recommend you to do this, and I think that you will agree with me. Let all who are with me raise their hands." They nearly all put up their hands; but I found that this was an unsatisfactory way even if the intention were good.

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CHAPTER VII

One day a man in the service of the Ministry of Public Instruction came to me to ask me to tell him of some village in which he could explain an admirable proposition offered by the Ministry. I told him which was the largest village of my twelve Volosti. I got the "Shod" together, and invited the official to go there with me.

This gentleman tried to explain to the peasants in rather an involved way a number of things that they did not understand at all. They were all silent.

"My friends," I said, "the Government proposes to start amongst you a school where you will learn to read, write, and look after bees. In return they only ask two things: three acres of land and a Guardian. Do you understand what a chance it is for you?"

"Yes, we understand," replied several.

"But," I said to the Government official, "I never decide anything in this way. I want to know what the majority of the peasants think of the business, and they know how much I respect their opinion. If it is contrary to your suggestion, I would rather they did not take it. If we force them to do what we think is advantageous for them, they will never understand by their own experience."

Then I told them to arrange the famous table, the chair, etc., and the sixty-three peasants were invited to say "yes" or "no." Thirty-one said "yes" and thirty-two said "no."

The official was in despair, especially as he had hoped to receive a tip for the happy result of the mission which had been entrusted to him.

"I note," said I to the peasants, "that thirty-one are for the scheme and really want it, which is a great plea-

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sure to me. The day will soon come when your majority will understand, and then it will be you who will beg that schools should be given to you without waiting until they are offered."

Some of the Starshinàs had philosophic tendencies, extremely kindly natures, and very religious souls. One, for instance, who was called Gregory Savélieff, came to me one day when I was in his Volost and began to complain of the difficulties of the service. He told me several stories, always finishing by stating "They are not afraid of God," sometimes meaning the peasants and sometimes the proprietors. It seemed that most of the trouble came from the cattle, which strayed on to neighbour's ground, and this particularly tormented him because it was always he, as Starshinà, who had to go into the question. Sometimes the cattle of the peasants were caught trespassing by the proprietors, in which case the peasants had to buy them back by paying a fine of one rouble for a horse or cow and half a rouble for a pig or sheep. At other times it was the cattle of the proprietor which the peasants shut up in their villages, and then the proprietor was obliged to pay the fine.

As he talked, the Starshinà gave me tea without sugar but with honey. The idea that in the factories the sugar is filtered through charcoal prepared from burnt bones prevents Orthodox Christians taking it when they are fasting. The honey made this good man think about the bee, and suddenly he cried out with an expression of ecstasy in his eyes: "The bee! There is a creature of the good God. She is always in the fields of other people and she never pays a fine." I laughed very much at this association of ideas.

I found this poor Starshinà one day very unhappy and anxious of mind.

"What is the matter?" I said.

"A terrible thing has happened to me. The police sent me some gipsies whom they said I was to keep prisoners till they came to fetch them. The gipsies begged me to

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allow them to go free for a few hours and swore that they would come back. I let them go and they never came back. I believed in their god, Pharaoh, and I am punished. The police have not found them again and I shall have to go to the Court."

"Don't be afraid," I said; "I will defend you; but you really cannot be Starshinà any more, for evidently it is not your job."

He was judged and acquitted, and threw himself at my feet, expressing his joy that he never could again be elected a Starshinà.

The judges elected by the peasants in each Volost had the right to order corporal punishment up to twenty-five strokes with the birch rod. In liberating a people whose proprietors had always been able to thrash them, the Government did not think it possible to abolish corporal punishment completely but only allowed it to be inflicted at the hands of the peasants themselves. It is true that there was a certain danger in this, but in the lives of an uneducated people—such as the Russians were before the Emancipation—there were many happenings which did not amount to any serious wrong-doing, but which could not be left without punishment, and which the judge, knowing very little of the psychology of the people's minds, would probably fail to understand or punish justly. However, in practice, punishment inflicted by the peasant judges was rarely taken very seriously by the criminals. Often the people who had to inflict the corporal punishment were poor devils, weak and unhealthy, who were merely allowed to stay in office because people were sorry for them, so it is easy to see how very little the rod was feared.

I never went into this question, nor did I ever receive a complaint from a flogged man, except in the case where a Starshinà, contrary to the law, took part in the judgment, which was strictly forbidden. All the Starshinà had to do was see that the sentence of the judges was carried out.

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Karamycheff was one of the Starshinàs who took this question most seriously. He insisted upon carrying out with the greatest exactitude what the judges decided, and even gave a certain solemnity to the execution of the sentence. Having noticed that the existence of a public-house a few kilometres from the office had a pernicious influence on the conduct of the peasants, he decided that in any affair where such bad influence could be directly or indirectly proved in the case of the condemned, the criminal was to be taken to the village where the public-house stood, and in front of its windows the scribe was to read publicly the condemnation, and then the guilty man was to be thrashed before everybody. These proceedings did not do the affairs of the innkeeper any good.

Karamycheff assured me that this man was his only enemy in the whole Volost.

Amongst the many cases inherited from my predecessor, one was very curious. It concerned the return of land of which the peasants had wrongfully taken possession to the proprietor. The latter had confided the direction of his affairs to a clerk living in Petersburg, who could never leave the city for more than three days. My predecessor had fixed the day when this person was to arrive at the village accompanied by the surveyors, who were to make the plans of the land which was to be cut off.

The day passed in discussions between this official and the peasants as to whether it was just to cut off this land and how it was to be done. When the peasants had at last admitted the right to do it, it was too dark and late to allow the surveyors to begin their job. The official, who had to catch his train at the station 100 kilometres away—there being only one train in the twenty-four hours—had to go at midnight, so the business was not settled, to the delight of the peasants, who thought they would keep the lands gratuitously until the next year, when exactly the same comedy would be played. I could only be astonished at the patience of my predecessor, and wondered why he had not told the

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proprietor that he had better put the job into the hands of somebody who had more time at his disposal than the clerk he had employed. However, as I knew that any correspondence on this subject would only put off the solution of the affair between proprietor and peasants, I resolved to tell the clerk the day he was to arrive at the village and also tell the surveyors to be there on the same day. I also sent for three peasants from a neighbouring village, who were to come as witnesses and to listen to the discussion on both sides.

The whole day was spent in useless gossip between the clerk and the peasants, who during the past year had had time to change their minds again. While this was going on, I spoke to the chief of the surveyors, a very capable young officer who seemed very pleased to introduce a new note into his dull work. I explained to him that it was very easy to make a plan at night, with the aid of two lanterns and a table. The surveyor was much pleased by this idea.

Towards evening the peasants, who had become more conciliatory, declared that they were quite ready to give the proprietor all that he ought to have according to the law, but, alas! it was already too dark to permit the surveyors to work. I told my secretary to draw up a minute on the subject of these declarations, and the three witnesses put a cross to it as their signature.

I then said to the clerk: "It is seven o'clock; at eleven o'clock the plan will be ready, and at midnight you can go."

I then turned to the peasants. "Bring two lanterns," I said.

"We have not any," they said, beginning to understand what I was going to do.

"What! in the whole village no lanterns? For every ten minutes that I have to wait for them, you will pay a fine of five roubles."

The lanterns appeared and I put candles into them, which were then lit.

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"Now we will go to the fields, my friends."

I went first and they followed me.

"As you have the right to choose the land that you want to keep," I explained to the peasants, "it is natural that you will choose the best for yourselves and will give the other to the proprietor. According to the law, that is your privilege."

"Yes," remarked a big fellow in rather a rude voice. "Why are they taking it from us?"

"Take this table," I said, "and carry it on your head with the four legs upwards. It is rather large, but is nothing for a fine fellow like you."

We then began to determine the limits of the land belonging to the village, and it was here that the peasants tried to curtail the land which belonged to the proprietor.

"Don't forget," I said to them, "that if you keep too much land here, you will have to give up to the proprietor a bigger piece near your houses. The total of the land given up is to be equal to a third of that which you now occupy, and I do not think, my friends, that you will like to see land belonging to a stranger just under your windows."

While I was speaking, the fellow who was walking in front with the table on his head did nothing but grumble. All of a sudden he disappeared into a dry trench which nobody had noticed, and the table covered him up.

"You see," said I to the peasants—"you see, God has punished him."

The peasants began to laugh, so sudden and unexpected had been his disappearance into the trench. Once he was clear of the ditch, the discontented gentleman continued walking on without saying a word, putting down his table when he was asked and putting it back on his head without protesting.

"My friends," I said to the peasants, "I warn you that it will be quite impossible for me to go back on my word. The boundaries that you have chosen are inscribed on the plan. If you want to keep everything here, I shall have to take a good deal of your land farther on."

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As usual, the peasants did not want to listen to advice, and so I cut off a great piece of land for the proprietor quite close to the village. It was then eleven o'clock, so I sent away the clerk and surveyors and went home.

I do not know if plans had ever before been made at night, but I think that very few have been made with more exactitude than this one; the lanterns enabled us to see with much more accuracy than any rule of a surveyor.

Only once was I obliged to act as though I remembered I was dealing with a savage people—that is to say a people with whom in case of insubordination one has to use force, call in the military, or resort to some such violent measure, if one does not wish to lose one's life.

It is astonishing, in spite of this savagery, that the emancipation of a people over whom the proprietors exercised all rights except that of taking their life was so peacefully accomplished. Their former masters could ill-treat, buy, or sell them. Why did not these people, when freed, turn on the landowners and with good reason revenge themselves for their sufferings under serfdom? But this was not the case; and between many proprietors and their serfs the relations were excellent.

I think the reason is to be found in the good-nature which is part of the Russian character, both in the lord and the peasant; and in the fact that the great majority of the peasants loved their proprietors as their proprietors loved them. Hard, cruel, bad proprietors who persecuted the people were exceptions.

The incident I am going to relate took place on the property of Prince Koltzoff Massalsky, situated in the Gorodovik Volost, where the people are the most savage kind of Old Believers. The peasants there wore their hair in a way I have never seen in any other part of Russia. They cut it in front and behind in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit they let one lock of hair of four or five centimetres remain on the neck, standing straight out.

In the papers of my predecessor I had discovered that

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the peasants complained that the lands which had been given them were bad and did not comprise the fifteen acres per "male soul" ordered by the law. So one day I went down to Prince Massalsky and sent for the peasants, asking them to choose ten of themselves to go with the Prince, the surveyor, and myself, to see the lands as they were. They brought a pony for me and a horse for the Prince, and we set off. The peasants took us over marsh-land which got worse and worse until the horses could scarcely get along; it was far from any habitation or any village, and in the middle of brush-wood and marsh I stopped.

"These are the lands that he has given us. That is the way he treats us. Can we live on them?" said one of the peasants, a sort of leader.

"What you say," I replied, "is impossible. You must have received other land."

"Yes," he replied, "they added this, but they did not give us enough—we have not received the five dessiatines per man."

While the gentleman was talking, I studied the plan with the surveyor to see whether he was speaking the truth.

"No, my friends," I said to the peasants, "you have received the five dessiatines near your villages. This land has been given you as a surplus."

"No," retorted the leader very loudly. "We have not had the five dessiatines. It is untrue—it is untrue!" he repeated getting more and more excited.

I turned to the Prince. "Will you explain to me," I said, "why, though the plan is supposed to indicate the extent of the land, these gentlemen assure me that it is incorrect?"

"The thing is simple enough," replied Massalsky. "These people are Old Believers who do not recognise either the Church or its cemetery. The peasants have made cemeteries next to their villages, and now they don't want to count them in. The cemeteries which were made

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by them, without any authorisation on the part of the Government, are naturally not on the Government plans.

"Well, my friends," I said to the peasants, "before complaining about the lands which have been assigned to you not being sufficient, you should have stated that fact, and I should not have given you or myself the trouble of coming here."

"But," said the leader, "we cannot dig the soil in the cemeteries, and we want to have our five dessiatines per head."

Massalsky interrupted by saying, "Well, then, give me your cemeteries, and I will grown beans and peas on your fathers' bones."

"I forbid you, Sir, to speak in a way which can only insult the peasants."

"Yes," went on the man, quick to see that I was taking their part—"yes. You see how he treats us, this gentleman, this noble, this Prince."

"Be silent," I said.

"We always have to be silent," continued the man, while the other peasants also began to grumble.

"Be silent, because you are in the presence of the law."

"What law?" said the man, laughing.

"You see this medal?" I said, showing him my medal of Arbiter of Peace.

"The medal!—what difference does it make to us?—the medal!"

"Go down on your knees," I cried, going towards him so as to be able to force him to kneel if he did not do so of his own accord.

It was a risk, but knowing the Russian peasant as I did, I thought it was the only course, because one never knows what he is capable of once his blood is up. We were three men unarmed, and they were ten, each with a hatchet in his belt. Happily, he knelt down and his comrades remained silent.

"Don't you understand, you fool," I said, "that it is just this medal which gives me the right to help you, and

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nobody else can do it? Stand up and be quiet. The whole question is settled. Let us go back to the Prince's house and we will talk."

I do not remember exactly how the matter ended, but I explained to the Prince that even if the law was against the peasants, morally he was in the wrong, because the peasants were formerly his serfs, and if they had made their cemeteries, it could only have been with his consent, or that of his agent.

I soon made the acquaintance of some of the people in my district, amongst whom, besides myself, there were three other Arbiters of Peace. Every year we came together under the ægis of the Marshal of the Nobility of the district, who formed an Assembly in which questions were settled which had to do with the quality and quantity of the land distributed to the peasants. For this work, which often took two or three months, we had to interview the landlords and the peasants, who came with their plans, and very often the discussions went on until two o'clock in the morning. It is worthy of note that the Assemblies at Porhoff, and in fact those over almost the whole of Russia, were conducted with an impartiality worthy of the greatest admiration, and there were no agrarian revolutions for nearly forty years after the introduction of the Emancipation.

At the time that I was Arbiter of Peace, this work generally consisted of a revision of the plans of the land already given to the peasants, resulting from complaints by the latter against some infractions of the law established by the "Pologenié," against their rights to these lands.

Besides the Assemblies of the Arbiters of Peace, there was also at Porhoff the Assembly of the Zemstvo, whose President was Count Rostovtseff, a distinguished man of forty, who lived on his estate about fifty versts off. His wife was an Englishwoman, née Bridgeman. They had two girls, aged eight and nine, and several smaller children. We soon made friends, and I often spent a few days with them on their estate of Stoudénetz.

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Count Rostovtseff was the son of the General to whom the Emperor Alexander II had confided the management of the work in connection with the Emancipation. Whilst still a young man, he was Colonel and Aide-de-Camp to the Emperor. Very cultivated and studious, he liked travelling, and on one of his journeys to England he married Miss Bridgeman. On the same journey he met several Russians, amongst whom was the revolutionary Herzen, and that was sufficient for a clique of courtiers, who could not forgive his father for the part he had played in the emancipation of the peasants, to revenge themselves on the son by accusing him of being a revolutionary. He was turned out of the Service and his epaulettes as an aide-de-camp were torn from him. Dishonoured before all the world, he went to the country and bought an estate, where he settled with his wife. But the Province was quick to discern the real meaning of the intrigues of the courtiers, and Rostovtseff was elected President of the Ouprava.

The Emperor went every year to visit the widow of the General on the anniversary of his death, and there he met the son, for his mother insisted upon his being present at these visits, the Emperor probably having understood that to make the acquaintance of a revolutionary does not mean that one wishes to become one. He always asked Rostovtseff each time, "Well, when are you coming back to my service?"

"I cannot, Sir," invariably replied the Count, who could not forget the affronts to which he had been subjected.

Directly I had managed to establish the administration at Sitchovo (the estate which my father had given me) and my business as Arbiter of Peace was well in hand, I decided to go to England to marry Miss Alice Gore, and I asked Count Rostovtseff to accompany me, to be at once my *père assis*—i.e. the godfather of the bride and bridegroom, which is usual in Russian weddings—and my best man. He accepted, and we went off. The Gores were then living at Hawkhurst, Kent.

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The family were all assembled for the marriage—five sons and five daughters, with the father and mother. After the usual ceremonies both in the Anglican and Orthodox Church, I started back to Russia with my wife. On the way she fell ill at Berlin, and we had to stay there for a week. Berlin then was not like it is to-day. It was only a small city and had far less attraction for strangers than towns like Dresden or Munich, without mentioning Vienna. There were scarcely any hotels, and never shall I forget the time I spent at the Hôtel Grande-Bretagne, which was supposed to be the best in the town because it was "Unter den Linden." The food was impossible—much too greasy to suit the appetite of a sick person. At last, my wife having been unable to eat anything for two days, I decided to bring in food secretly from the excellent Restaurant Hillier, which was already there in those days. However, the hotel-keeper, having noticed my smuggling, protested strongly, and we had subsequent conversations in which I told him the brutal truth.

"Your dinner," I shouted at the proprietor, "is not possible for the stomach of a sick woman!"

"Sir, my chef is considered the best chef in Berlin."

"And I say that he is not a chef at all, but a bad female cook."

"Sir, would you mind making inquiries, and they will tell you that when there are receptions at Court, it is I who have to do the catering and it is my cook who prepares the dishes."

"I understand now," I said, "why, when the Russian Empress comes to Berlin, she and all with her try to get away as quickly as they can, because of the awful food that is given to them at Court."

"Really, what you say is quite impossible."

"It is so possible that I heard it myself from Count Matthew Vielhorsky, who, as Court Chamberlain, always goes with the Empress when she travels abroad."

Such a conversation could not take place in a good hotel at Berlin nowadays.

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At last, towards the end of our visit, my wife got better, but I had had such a row with the proprietor that, to soften our hearts, the wife of the latter sent us large bouquets. The fame of our tremendous rows was so great that when we went down the staircase to go away, it was full of people on every landing who wanted to look at us. And really we must have looked very funny, as my wife carried in one hand a large bouquet and in the other the cage with her canary which she had brought from Australia. I also had a big bouquet which I insisted upon holding, in spite of the difficulty of carrying my valise.

In a few years after the Franco-Prussian War, Berlin was already quite another town, and nowhere could one find better restaurants or better food.

Back at Pskoff, we stayed for a few days with my father, and then we drove to my father's estate at Gouslistchi, where I had settled whilst I was Arbiter of Peace in the district. Here we lived for several weeks, often making excursions to my estate at Sitchovo, four kilometres away. On this estate there was only a large wooden house, in which lived an agent with his wife and little children. But soon after this, a small sum of money sent to me by my wife's parents enabled me to buy from my father the estate which once I had been sent to offer to Novosiltzeff, as before mentioned. It was close to Porhoff, and consisted of some 300 acres of land with a house and some policies.

After having made the house comfortable I established my office there as Arbiter of Peace, and here I lived with my wife for the four years during which I filled that office.

Poor Count Rostovtseff, who had gone with me to England, had an agonising surprise awaiting him. Already at the railway station, forty miles from his estate, somebody said they had heard that all was not well at home, without quite knowing what was wrong. On the way he met a peasant, who told him that one of his children was dead of diphtheria. About ten kilometres from his house he met another peasant, of whom he asked if it was true that one of his daughters was dead.

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"No," said the peasant, "it is not true, because both are dead."

One can easily imagine the feelings of the unhappy father in learning that all this misfortune had happened while he was with me in England. The moment we heard this awful news we rushed off to Stoudénetz. We felt our position terribly, as it was because of us that the husband had left the poor mother alone to bear the sufferings and agonising death of her children.

The Count and Countess came out to the porch to meet us. We men shook hands without being able to speak, while the women threw themselves into each other's arms, sobbing. We stayed for a week at Stoudénetz, and established a friendship between the Rostovtseffs and ourselves which contributed enormously to make our existence at Porhoff more tolerable during the four years we stayed there.

Back at the house, I set to work to clear up a number of questions which had accumulated during my absence abroad.

We were served by former serfs, and some of them were very interesting. Amongst these, the cook stood out—he was not a young man, but did his job well. His passion was hunting and, unfortunately, drink. He had served three generations of us—my grandfather, my father, and myself—and twenty years later my son.

Unlike most hunters, he did not care to talk of his exploits, all the more that they were not particularly brilliant until one took into consideration the fearful difficulties that he had to overcome. Philip had kept all his life his first gun, the only one he ever had, and which was given to him between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. It was a gun which the soldiers had used in 1812, with a very large barrel, badly put into its stock, to which it was tied in several places with bits of string. The quantity of charge for game shooting was naturally enormous, but the lead and powder could be obtained at Staraya-Russa, seventy-five miles off, whereas the balls

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for elk or bear shooting had to be made at home. Philip took immense trouble to make his own bullets, using the barrel of his gun for this purpose. The bullets were in consequence cylindrical and enormous, but he did not mind. What spoilt his pleasure in hunting was the idea that he had only one charge at his disposal; he could never take the slightest risk when hunting a bear or elk —if he did not kill them at the first shot, they would kill him. Yet he managed to kill twelve bears and two hundred and fifty elks.

To understand why my father had never thought of getting him a decent gun, one must take into consideration his complete indifference for everything which was not exactly agricultural. When he was at Gouslistchi he never thought of anything but his land and the estate. As for Philip's hunting, it interested him very little, especially as he was allowed to sell the beasts he killed for his own profit, and as there was always plenty of game on the table, nobody ever thought of asking how the hunter came by it. Philip went into the forest without the slightest fear to hunt bear and elk, although the latter, when wounded, were very dangerous. One day there was nothing between the man and a bear but a tree behind which he was charging his old gun, while he went round and round the tree to escape the bear. Another time he shot at an elk which was going over the marsh. The animal went a few steps and then fell down on a little island of firm earth, on which was growing a single tree. Philip, thinking that the beast was dead, went up to it, when it rose up, and not having time to recharge his gun, he climbed up into the tree and loaded it with the second bullet he had in his pocket, and aimed at the elk; but he did not fire because he heard the bullet roll down the barrel and fall at the foot of the tree. Happily, however, the elk fell down again, this time for good.

One day he killed a bear in the presence of its family. Later on he killed the she-bear and brought the little ones to us. One of them stayed with us a whole year,

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and was only killed at last by my father's orders because it nearly scalped me. In those days bears and elks lived quietly in the forests which surrounded Gouslistchi. Once my father told the peasants to follow the bear tracks, to find out how many bear lairs there were in the 60,000 acres of his estate, and they found sixteen. As for the elks, they went about in enormous herds, for between 1850 and 1860 our estates were in the centre of a country much bigger than the half of France, covered with forests and without any railway. To-day (I speak of the time which preceded the Great War) the forests are mostly destroyed and several railway lines go across the country, bringing hunters from Petersburg. The elks have almost disappeared, and the bears have been replaced by wolves, which have become very mischievous.

Philip had once performed an act of courage and devotion in the past which made us love him even more than for his hunting capacities. On either side of our estate there were lands belonging to the Government, where the latter had tried the experiment of mobilising the peasants. When they went to work on the estates, they took off their military caps and hung them on the demarcation posts between their allotments, leaning their guns and cartridge belts on the same place. Whilst working, if from afar they saw a troika, or four-horse carriage (tchetverik), which might contain travellers of distinction, they ran as quickly as they could to the posts, put on their caps and their bandoliers, and took their guns so as to present arms.

This discipline was good for the peasants; they became more practical than others and had more initiative. They made excellent roads, the remains of which could still be seen a short while ago. But when in 1882 the corn was attacked by rust and the bread caused fearful pains in the stomach, the rumour spread at once that it was their officers who had poisoned the corn. The rebellion broke out with such prodigious violence that the officers could scarcely fly in time, and so in many cases were massacred on the way. However, a few hid in the forests, and Philip

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—a little boy then—knew where they were hiding and used to take food to them. One day the peasants arrived in great number and asked my grandfather to give up the officers. My grandfather, seated at one of the windows of his house, pretended not to know where they were. That exasperated the peasants, who began fighting amongst themselves to decide whether they should hang my grandfather or not. While they were crying and yelling without making up their minds, my grandfather's servants got ready a little carriage on the other side of the house, and my grandfather, taking advantage of the great tumult, got away in it. The peasants then seized hold of Philip and beat him, to try to make him say where the officers were hidden, but he did not tell them, and managed to get away by throwing himself into the water and swimming across a little river. An army was sent into the different districts where the peasants had revolted and massacred their officers. They were first beaten, and then they stood them up in line and shot every tenth man.

Philip's services at Porhoff left a good deal to be desired, for he was very often drunk and sometimes so much so that the valet's wife had to get the dinner ready. As the town was near, he could always find friends who would give him vodka. One day when he could scarcely stand up, I sent for him.

"Philip!" I said. "How shameful! how shameful! You who have served all my family with such devotion. You——," etc., etc.

After a long sermon I said to him at the finish, "I let you have no money, so that you cannot get drink. Tell me where you get it. Who gives it to you?"

Half asleep, he replied, "Well, it is just *that* I will not tell thee."

In using the word "thee," as people did before the Emancipation, he wanted to express his devotion, in spite of his resolution not to give up his secret.

My wife was present at this conversation, and we both laughed over the reply.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE rural police, who were always exceedingly badly paid in Russia, had taught the common people to offer them all sorts of gifts and bribes. This custom had become so much a habit that even at a time when, thanks to the emancipation of the serfs, the conditions of existence throughout the country were completely changed, it was difficult to stop it. The offerings were generally wild strawberries, wild raspberries, mushrooms, and, best of all, eggs—the last were the most common. They were brought in little square baskets of birch bark, made by the peasants themselves, and the basket was put in a large handkerchief, the four corners of which they held.

I had explained over and over again to the peasants that it was useless to offer me bribes, but the country under my orders was very large and the villages far apart. It was natural that never a day passed but some old woman came, and while explaining her troubles to me begged me to accept her offerings. Seeing that none of my protests had the slightest effect, and not being willing to punish these poor creatures for misdeeds to which other people had accustomed them, I made up my mind to capture their imagination by adopting an out-of-the-way method. I told my servant to let me know when he saw a peasant man or woman coming up to the house carrying a basket. I would then go out to meet them in the courtyard, take their basket, and with a well-directed kick send it into the air with all its contents. The effect was surprising, and this original way of dealing with the matter was so soon broadcast that I could no longer practise this new sport, and nobody offered me any more gifts. However, they tried later on, and in a more serious way. It was during recruiting time. From early dawn to night the office was

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filled with peasants, who came from every corner of my twelve districts to ask me all sorts of things. They waited until I was awake, standing against the wall close to each other, forming a compact block of humanity, in order to show their reverence for the room of the "Seigneur," where they were afraid of taking up too much space.

One day my servant came to tell me that someone had brought an enormous sugar-loaf, weighing about 24 lb., to the kitchen.

Without losing an instant I went to the office.

"Tell me frankly, my friends, which of you gave the cook the sugar-loaf. I will forgive the guilty man, because he probably did not know that I do not accept that kind of present. I want to see him, and I ask him to step out of the ranks."

I waited for some minutes, and then a peasant came out, looking very miserable and shy. I saw the man was a serf who had belonged to us.

"Kouzma," I said, "how can you think that your offering will have any effect in making me do what you want? You are not rich, and I am very sorry for you. Your sugar is going to be thrown into the water. I order you to go back to the kitchen, take the sugar with you, and go to the river and throw it into the hole that was made in the ice." (The river was already frozen over.)

"Karamycheff," I said to the Starshinà, who was standing among the peasants, "will you please go with this man to the river and see that he executes the order I have given him?"

"I hear," replied the Starshinà, and both went away.

I began, while I was waiting, to do some business, but the presence of Karamycheff became more and more indispensable, because most of the men were of his village. I had to put off several questions, and I could not understand why he was so long. At last the two men came back.

"It is only a hundred and fifty yards to the river. Why were you so long? Did you do as I told you?"

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"No, your Honour, I did not."

"Why, no? Why didn't you?"

"Because, your Excellency, there were lots of people on the river who were taking ice to put on their sleighs to take it to the town—men with long rods, to which were attached iron hooks, and I thought they would certainly fish up the sugar-loaf if I threw it in, so I told Kouzma to break it into little bits and throw it into the water. The peasants who saw us thought we were mad, but because I wore the medal of the Starshinà, none of them dared come near."

The Zemstvo of the district of Porhoff had an Education Committee under it whose members liked to think that they were men who interested themselves in the intellectual development of the people. This Committee chose the masters, appointed or dismissed them, and superintended their methods of teaching.

A neighbouring proprietor, Miss Müller, who lived in the country, had founded a school for the children of the peasants, which she looked after with real zeal. After having experienced great difficulty in finding a good master, she chose an excellent young man who was both capable and devoted to his profession, and for two years the school had gone on very well, but she was always in an agony of fear lest this master should not please the Committee. One day I got a letter from her announcing that the Committee was coming, and begging me to be at the examinations which they would make the pupils go through—"for I know," she said, "that if you are there they will not dare to talk too much."

I arrived on the appointed day and found the members of the Committee already installed in armchairs, which had been taken out into the garden, and about three yards away from them, forty pupils, ranging from eight to fourteen years of age, with their young master. Miss Müller was so upset by the idea of what might happen that she could not leave her room. The President of the Committee, a retired Colonel named Kornilovitch, signed to one of the boys to come forward.

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Without showing the least embarrassment the boy came forward and stood two paces off.

"Tell me," said the Colonel, looking at him with a very severe air and in an authoritative voice, "why did God create man?"

"To live," replied the boy, without the slightest hesitation.

I wanted to go up and kiss the child, and was only held back by my curiosity as to how the Colonel would accept this sensible answer to an idiotic question.

"How to live!" he said. "Who can have taught you that! To *glorify* God, to *adore* Him, to *thank* Him for having created you."

I do not remember what else the member of the Commission said, but I can still see the pretty face of the boy staring at him with wide-open eyes.

I left the Committee and went to calm Miss Müller.

"Don't be afraid," I said. "I have gone through the boys' copy-books. They spell beautifully, and when I go back to Porhoff I will say everywhere that if they are not pleased with your school I will send you the papers that the Zemstvo sends to me, so that your pupils can correct the spelling!"

One of the drawbacks to our life at Gorodistché, near Porhoff, was that this villa was rather at the mercy of thieves and vagabonds, and during the three or four years that we lived there, I never went to bed a single night without being prepared for some unpleasant episode, and when I went away, I never came back without being thankful when I saw from afar the chimneys of the house. Being close to the town, burglars could have come just for pure sport and then gone back to cover up their traces. We only had five servants—a butler, cook, coachman, and two housemaids—and had neither a night-watchman nor a dog. The first were not trustworthy, and it was very easy to poison a dog. I always kept a Belgian gun near me, with which I often amused myself by shooting at a target, and this was my best guardian. In the town they

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said that even the crows went round and did not fly over my estate.

I was enormously struck by the courage with which my wife bore my absences from home, during which she was quite alone. One day, when I had just arrived at Petersburg, someone told me that he had heard that Gorodistché had been set on fire. Anyone can imagine my feelings, all the more that, having dismissed a bad workman a short while before, I knew that I ran the risk of arson. To telegraph would not help me much, as I should not know anything positive for three or four days, so I at once left for home, where, to my great joy, I found my wife quite happy, in spite of the unpleasant adventure which she had had the night before of seeing our barn burnt down. The people of the town, however, had come at once and had worked with so much energy that the fire had not spread.

. . . . . .

After more than a year of separation from her family, it was natural that my wife should long to see them again, so I decided to take her to England in July, for that was the time when I had the least to do, as the people were busy with the harvest.

In England I stayed ten days with her family, and then went back to Russia alone. During this time my wife had given birth to a son, and we called him Vladimir.

At the end of October I went back to England to fetch my wife and child; he was then three months old. We embarked on a steamboat going to Hamburg. The steamer was a miserable one and we had horrible weather, but as there was scarcely anybody on board we could have the services of the stewardess, to whom, as I knew we should be very ill, I entrusted the child. The journey was awful and lasted seventy-two hours instead of the usual ten. My wife and I were incapable of moving and stayed in our berths all the time, but the stewardess was marvellously good in looking after the child, for which we amply rewarded her.

After twenty-four hours' rest at Hamburg, we went on

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to Russia, but we stopped at the German frontier in the hope of getting a decent German woman to take back with us as a nurse. The hotel-keeper there offered us a woman of about fifty, clean and decent and quite ready to go to the ends of the world if we wanted her. "How long will it take you to get your passport and visa?" I asked, "because this is not a pleasant place to wait for long."

"I do not want a passport," she said, to our great astonishment. "I know all the tricks of the smugglers, and while they are getting you through at the Russian Customs, which generally takes two hours, I shall pass the frontier and find you at the second station, where the train stops."

She said this so cheerfully and with such certainty that we believed her at once and gave her money in token of our good faith—and everything turned out as she had said.

This woman stayed with us without a passport for a year, and we liked her very much. "How will you go back?" I asked her one day. "The Russian police will not let you pass."

"I shall go back the same way that I came," she said calmly.

This son of mine, Vladimir, owing to having been born in England, is the only one of my family who can go through Europe without having to face the worry and annoyance of passports and visas to which Russians are condemned. According to English law, his birthplace gives him the right to consider himself an English subject, and he naturally takes advantage of this.

One day Karamycheff came to see me and stood at the door without saying anything, with tears in his eyes.

"What is the matter, Karamycheff?" I asked him. "You don't look happy."

"I want to announce to your Excellency that I cannot do my work any longer, and I pray you to let me resign the office of Starshinà," he said, wiping a tear off his cheek.

"Explain yourself. You know that in two months

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you will have done your compulsory three years and then you will be free."

"I know; but I also know that the Volost will again elect me for three years, and I felt I must come and explain to you why I wish to resign. The truth is that I am not worth anything now as Starshinà."

"What has happened to you? Why this change?"

"My wife is dead," he said quietly.

A few minutes passed in silence. I had no wish to plumb the depths of his sorrow and he did not feel it necessary to try to explain it to me. At last, as he continued silent, I said, "I admit the greatness of your misfortune, my dear Siméon Ivanovitch, but would your life be a happy one doing nothing? You cannot till your ground, because you have let it ever since you were Starshinà. How will you occupy yourself? And another thing. Does not your honest and devoted service to the law give you any satisfaction by making you feel that you are useful? Don't you see how very necessary you are to your Volost and to me, your Chief?"

"I know, your Excellency; but I do not see it because I have changed."

"In what way?"

"I cannot be severe any more" ("Stroguim byt ne mogou").

This admission that he could no longer be severe towards others because of his own unhappiness was the greatest testimony that could be given to prove the depth of his sorrow.

After a silence, I said, "What could you do?"

"I want to go far from man and to live for some time in a forest with my little boy, who is only three, and my sister, who will look after him. To look after the affairs of a district is quite impossible for me at this moment. I tell you this as if you were my own father."

"I can find you a place in the middle of forests—a place far away from roads and railways and towns—and at first as an occupation you would only have to attend

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to the agriculture of a few dessiatines. Little by little you would have to increase the arable land, but as there is very little, the salary would only be three hundred roubles per year."

"That is all I want," said Karamycheff. "If you will only tell me where it is, directly my two months of service are over I will go there."

"Very well, my dear friend. You will find this retreat in my own estate of Sitchovo."

"It is God Who sends me this good fortune." After saying these words, he made several signs of the Cross and then stood quietly.

"Now go," I said. "I know your value and you have had time to learn my ways. For the future you will not call me 'your Excellency,' but you will address me as Alexander Nikolaevitch. I understand that your soul wants rest at this moment, but all the same I know your active nature, and I hope that you will, little by little, as you return to your normal condition, find new interests at Sitchovo. It is an estate of more than nine thousand acres, of which about three thousand are only marshland covered with cranes and bears. It is the end of an enormous marsh of eighty kilometres, and I intend, if possible, to drain the part that belongs to me and at the same time to install a water-turbine which is wanted to establish a water-mill. That will interest you!"

"I don't know what a turbine is," replied Karamycheff, "but I like everything to do with machinery, and I will do my best to help you in your enterprise."

With that I sent him away and went to tell my wife that at last I had found an agent for Sitchovo.

After two months Karamycheff came back. "I wait for your orders," he said, holding the door open. "My sister, my niece and little child, and myself are all ready to go to-morrow if you order it. I have said good-bye to the Volost, who gave me the most touching farewell. Only one peasant did not come to say good-bye, and that was the innkeeper."

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"You can go when you like," I said. "You will find at Sitchovo a Starosta with his family. He has served my father for twenty years, and will stay with me to the time that I find someone to replace him. However, I must warn you that Sitchovo is not a cheerful place, as it is very isolated; but as you want to live alone, I do not think you could do anything better."

Karamycheff then went off with his sister, his niece, and his little child.

He knew how to read and write and could manage simple sums. He started work, and little by little he regained the energy which had left him after the death of his wife. What greatly helped him was the interest which he took in the accomplishment of one of the jobs which I had given him to do. This was to establish hydraulic power by using up the water which came out of an enormous marsh whose level did not differ sensibly from that of the surrounding fields. Canals of different depths carried the water into one large canal which drained towards the lower level and formed itself into a small river. By constructing a dam we managed to get a fall which allowed us to work a turbine and a saw-mill. I explained to Karamycheff how to take a level, and it was he who did all the levelling work necessary for us to do. This scheme took years, and most of the work could only be done with foreign workmen. It is the peasants of White Russia—Kanavstchiki, as they are called—who dig canals. They go all over the country to work at a business which descends from father to son. Stone buildings could only be erected by Esthonian stonemasons, who were sent for from their own country, and confined their work to masonry, whereas buildings of wood had to be erected by carpenters from Twer, who surpassed all other carpenters. They built us a modest but quite spacious house, with some outhouses.

In 1850 my father's forests, as most of the forests of the Government of Pskoff, brought in so little that it was almost impossible to get sufficient revenue to pay for the

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expense of keeping them up and find the wages of the eleven Russian foresters and their German chief. The best way to get anything out of it was to allow the peasants to go into the forests three days a year to strip off the bark of the lime-trees, from which they made themselves shoes called "lapti." An enormous quantity of packages of bark were then carried into the estate office and divided into two equal parts; one was given to the peasants, and the other kept by the estate. Surveillance of the forests during this operation was as necessary for the forests as dangerous for the foresters. Anxious to get as much bark as possible, the peasants ruined the trees without compunction, thus making them incapable of producing new supplies for the next year. Armed with their hatchets which they knew how to wield admirably, they became almost like wild devils, putting up with no opposition from the foresters; during ten years they killed three foresters.

At the death of my father in 1870, the property of Gouslistchi was divided into four parts, between my two brothers, my half-brother Eugène, and myself. As Sitchovo was nearly equal in value to each of these portions, I received only a small addition to my land. As my two brothers[1] were in Government service and lived in remote provinces, I had to become tutor to Eugène, with the duty of looking after the administration of his estate.

The conditions of life, thanks to the emancipation of the peasants, were completely altered. The cost of the forests had gone up and surveillance became more and more difficult. Knowing that Karamycheff with his severe and honest character would run great risk of being killed at this season of cutting the bark, I ordered him to stop once for all all dangerous interference and let the peasants do exactly as they liked in my forests. The next year, of course, there was nothing to cut! But being at this

[1] After my departure for foreign parts I only saw my two brothers once or twice. They both died young, each leaving a widow and children.

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time the guardian of my brother Eugène, and being obliged to give an account of my administration to the guardianship appointed by the Nobility, I could not introduce this ruinous system into the forests which belonged to him, and I could only beg Karamycheff not to go himself to look after the business, but to give it into the hands of the foresters.

One day they came and told him that my brother's forests were filled with people who were cutting the lime-trees. He straightway mounted his horse and went off at full gallop. The forest was nine miles off, and not far away was a village adjoining my land.

"Where are your men?" asked Karamycheff, coming to the village, where he could only see old men and women.

"They have gone to the fields," was the answer.

After having tied up his horse to a hedge, Karamycheff went on foot to the forest and sat down at its fringe to wait. Gradually the peasants came out, all of them carrying enormous packages of bark on their backs. A little unpleasantly surprised, but without saying a word, they came round to the agent and put their packages of bark on the ground. After an hour of waiting for those who were late, they all got up and went in silence to the village. The population grouped itself very anxiously round Karamycheff. Thinking that he was going to fine them and speak of the police, punishment, and prison, the peasants looked very hostile.

"Gentlemen," said Karamycheff, "I know your way of thinking about the question of the forests which belong to the nobles, so all discussion about it is useless, because I do not come to you to fulfil the functions of a judge, and like yourselves I am only a simple peasant." Then suddenly changing his tone: "Look," he said, pointing to the high boots he wore, "I am not from these parts. Where I come from they do not wear bark shoes" (*lapti*). "But the other day, passing by your church, I saw a dead man lying in his coffin with lapti on his feet. Would you like"—here he raised his voice, with an expression of great

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solemnity—" would you like to go to the Eternal Judgment in stolen clothes ? "

The old men fell on their knees, making the sign of the cross and murmuring, " Nobody has ever hurt us like you, Siméon Ivanovitch."

The young men remained standing up, but with their heads bent, and ashamed.

My agent untied his horse, mounted, and turning to the people, " To-morrow," he said, " every head of a family will bring me four roubles—as a fine for every ' male soul ' of the family." And every one of them, without protesting, brought him the fine.

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CHAPTER IX

In 1870 a second son was born to us—Nicholas—and it was impossible to think of dragging two children about to make visits to our relations in England, and it was equally impossible to go without them, leaving them to the care of a nurse. These difficulties, and the fact that my work as Arbiter of Peace would soon be over, as the relations between the nobles and the peasants were now sufficiently well established, gave me the idea of sending in my resignation and going back to Germany to take up science again, in spite of the advice of my friends, who tried to persuade me to go to Petersburg with a view to entering Government service. They were incapable of understanding my interest in science and my aversion to the bureaucracy (Tschinovnism). Every time I saw them they did all they could to persuade me to take service in some Ministry, promising me all sorts of promotion and protection, especially the good Count Pahlen, who had become Minister of Justice by this time, and his delightful wife, whom I had known at Pskoff. One day when I was at Petersburg the Countess told me that she was very anxious for me to attend her party next day, where there would be not only some distinguished guests she had managed to secure, but also some young people.

When I came into the immense drawing-room of the Minister of Justice, with its two rows of windows, there were two little groups of guests standing apart. One of these groups was composed of about fifteen people, comprising some high officials, and several ladies sitting in armchairs and on sofas surrounding our hostess. The other group consisted of four young people—Sabouroff and his wife, daughter of Countess Solloghoub, and the young Prince Ouroussoff, who was afterwards Ambassador

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to Paris, and myself. At a little distance from our group, Count Bobrinsky was leaning against the wall. Someone, either a professional pianist or a guest, was playing one piece after another on the piano which stood in the middle of the almost empty drawing-room, and in the centre, all alone, stood a handsome and elegant gentleman, the celebrated Chief of the Third Department, i.e. the Secret Police—Count Peter Schouvaloff. He was the man of the moment, and that to such an extent that in the town he was called "Peter the Fourth," and all sorts of stories were circulated about him. His position rendered him omnipotent over those who might oppose him, as he could imprison and send anybody, without trial, to Siberia. People said that he had the most enormous influence over the Emperor, that he even quarrelled with him, and that one day he actually allowed himself to give him a box on the ear. Without doubt, however, this was just stupid gossip arising from the fact that there was a struggle going on between the Emperor Alexander II, who wanted to marry Princess Dolgorouky, and the party who, for political reasons, opposed the marriage.

Schouvaloff was standing absolutely still, and it was difficult to know whether it was the music which was fascinating him or whether it was a plausible pretext not to have to take part in the conversation of the people who stood round our hosts. He never even answered when Count Pahlen, in almost a reverent manner, spoke to him once or twice.

I went up to Count Bobrinsky, who was looking at him quizzically, and asked, pointing out Schouvaloff, if he did not think that the gentleman looked awe-inspiring. "Yes; one would be afraid of walking past him," replied Bobrinsky laughing.

After some time the Sabouroffs decided to go, and gradually moved towards the door, which was not very far away. I was following them, trying to hide behind the big red velvet crinoline of Madame Sabouroff, and we were just a step from the door when suddenly Pahlen rushed at

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us, seized my hand, and took me up to Schouvaloff, presenting me as the son of the late Nicholas Stépanovitch Wolkoff.

Schouvaloff shook me warmly by the hand, after which I hastily caught up Sabouroff, who was still in the hall. I understood clearly that they had invited me to this curious evening party so as to give me the chance of being introduced to the omnipotent Schouvaloff, with the object of facilitating my introduction into some Government service which would lead to a brilliant career. But the excellent Count Pahlen had no idea how odious this Third Department, i.e. the Secret Police, was to me, although it may possibly be argued that it is necessary to safeguard an autocratic Government; yet the prospect of taking employment in a country governed—as one might say—by a Chief of this Department did not appeal to me at all.

Next day I hurried back to Gorodistché, where with my wife we went into the question thoroughly and decided, after mature reflection, to give up the idea of my becoming a Tchinovnik, to say good-bye to our friends in Petersburg, and to leave for abroad.

Sitchovo was now beginning to bring us in enough to allow us to live in some University town where research work in connection with vegetable physiology was considered of value. Professor Sachs, very celebrated at this moment, had established a laboratory at Würzburg, in which scientific men who had already finished their studies might work, and it was there that I thought of going with my family. Therefore one day, after having said good-bye to the Rostovtseffs, the Dondoukoffs, Princess Schahovskoy, my three colleagues, and the twelve Starshinàs, we started for Würzburg with the two children, and hired a furnished apartment there.

Professor Sachs, who was already conversant with my work concerning the influence of light on plants, received me very amiably and gave me two rooms in his laboratory. There I worked for a year on Negative Heliotropism

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(the movement of plants away from the light), but I did not manage to determine the causes from which result this marvellous phenomenon, so I never published anything relating to it. However Sachs, to whom I communicated my point of view on the subject, has treated the matter very fully in the third edition of his work.[1]

After living a year at Würzburg, we decided to visit our relations in England, before moving to Heidelberg.

The Gores lived at that time in Devonshire. They had a villa at the entrance to the splendid estate of Lord Devon, Powderham Park. It would be difficult to imagine more beautiful fields or trees, or more luxuriant vegetation than is found in this county. I suppose it is because it is never very hot in summer and the winters are almost as mild as those at Nice, though much wetter. I saw at General Studd's a camellia out in the open which produced 8,000 flowers a year.

Just at this time everybody was beginning to learn to ride the bicycle, and my father-in-law and I did the same, with the result that we could soon go long rides, which tired us horribly, for the miserable machines of those days were not in the least like those of to-day. The wheels were of equal size and there was no proper brake. There was neither a large nor a small cogwheel, and no chain.

One day I was riding my bicycle into the splendid park when a carriage in which there was an old gentleman and a young lady suddenly stopped beside me. The gentleman said something to me in English, but as at this time I did not speak it, I replied in French. Then he told me in that language that nobody was allowed in the park on a bicycle, upon which I explained my ignorance, saying that as I was staying at the villa which the Gores rented at the edge of the park, I thought that they were allowed to go in. The gentleman then bowed to me and signed to me to continue my ride.

[1] *A Primer of Botany* (*Lehrbuch der Botanik*), by Dr. Julius Sachs, 3rd edition. This edition was translated into English and printed at Oxford at the Clarendon Press in 1875.

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Next day I had an invitation from Lady Agnes Wood, daughter of Lord Devon, to lunch at the Castle.

The castle was very interesting from many points of view. It was an enormous edifice of the fourteenth century, whose high walls were topped by battlements. When I arrived I recognised the lady I had seen in the carriage. At lunch, besides Lord Devon, Lady Agnes and her husband, Mr. Wood,[1] there was an old gentleman who said that he had been in Russia and had stayed at a town which was called—but the name seemed to him so terrible that he always made a face when he said it—Tchar-Tchar-Tchar-koff. It was all he remembered of Russia!

After lunch Lady Agnes asked me if I was a musician. On my replying that I was, she asked me to play duets with her. I was a pretty good reader at this time, but I soon saw that she was much better than I. "You will not derive much enjoyment from playing with me, madame," I said; "I am not nearly good enough for you."

"Do you play the organ?" she inquired.

"No, madame."

"I should like to show you our organ," she said, "if you will come up to the drawing-room."

We went up, she, her husband, and myself. The drawing-room was a rectangular room of spacious dimensions with an enormous portrait painted by Lampi of Lord Courtenay, English Ambassador to Louis XV. At the end of the room was a big organ, up to which we went. "What I dislike about the organ," I said to Lady Agnes, "is the fact that one has to get someone or other to work the bellows before one can play. His presence and his fatigue seem to me to spoil the inspiration of the musician."

"My husband will do the blowing, if it will interest you to hear the organ," she said, and without waiting for me to reply, she sat down, while the husband began to blow.

[1] Now Lord Halifax.

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I looked at her feet and hands with great interest. It was amazing with what quickness and certainty those elegantly shaped hands and feet manipulated the notes and pedals. The husband went on blowing, but I did not even think of him, so absorbed was I by this delightful woman.

Afterwards she and her husband took me round several rooms, of which I only remember one bedroom, of which the big bed and the four armchairs struck my imagination. The bed had a splendid cover of red velvet embroidered with gold, the chairs were upholstered in the same stuff, and opposite the bed was an enormous chimney-piece whose ornamental sculpture reached the ceiling, to the width of several metres on both sides.

As I expressed my admiration for this fine room, Mr. Wood asked me if I was interested in painting and if I drew. "I draw a little," I replied, "but not very much."

"Would you care to come and sketch with me?" he asked. "We can go on horseback, take paints with us, and work a little."

"Nothing would please me more," I answered, so we packed our things and went off.

I had never seen these beautiful English hills before, with their luxuriant vegetation which reached up to our stirrups. After some time we came to a place where there was a fine view of the castle. We dismounted, and after about an hour's painting went back. I liked Mr. Wood's drawings very much; one could see that he was an expert in water-colour, whereas I was then only an amateur.

A few days later, accompanied by my wife and children, I left for Heidelberg, which I had not seen for so many years. We settled in a furnished apartment in the Anlagen, and I immediately tried to find out where I could work. The Professor of Botany, Pfitzer, a morphologist, suggested that I should occupy a house belonging to the University, in which there were two big rooms. In one of these Professor Adolph Mayer was working at agricultural chemistry, but the other was empty and could be

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used as a laboratory for vegetable physiology. I took this room and engaged the servant who was supposed to keep it in order, and there I worked for two years, sometimes using instruments that I borrowed from the University. I had the benefit of the heating apparatus and the gas for lighting quite gratuitously, although I was a stranger. I do not know if such conditions and such generosity still exist, but they witness to the respect which the entire country had at that time for intellectual work.

However, the influence of Berlin was already beginning to make itself felt. Helmholtz and Kirchhoff could not resist it and accepted better-paid posts there, but Bunsen remained at Heidelberg. (A big restaurant and the public garden now occupy the place of the laboratory of which I have just spoken.)

I continued my experiments on the existence of Negative Heliotropism, but did not manage to discover the law which governs it; so I occupied myself by examining the absorption of the different rays of the spectrum in solutions of chlorophyll. The result of these studies was published in the *Lectures of the Natural History Association of Heidelberg*. I also made researches in conjunction with Adolph Mayer, the results of which were published in the *Mitteilungen aus dem Landwirtschaftlichen Laboratorium, Universität, Heidelberg*, 1878.

Life at Heidelberg was very agreeable. We had many friends, both amongst foreigners and Germans. I have to this day kept up my friendship with a Miss Arnold, daughter of the celebrated anatomist and sister of the equally celebrated pathologist. We played a lot of croquet—in those days the fashionable game—with American ladies, and on Sundays we went to the opera at Mannheim.

One day I received an invitation from the University of Odessa to take up a professorship there in Vegetable Physiology. I must admit the proposition left me cold, for never having been in a Russian University, I did not

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even know what sort of existence the professors led. I had heard that the climate was terrible, tropical heat in summer and arctic cold in winter. Soon after, the same invitation came a second time, in terms still more flattering to my vanity, and at last, after due reflection, I decided to send in my conditions of acceptance, which were:

(1) Whereas I had only taken my degree as Magister, and therefore could not be made Professor,

(2) I would consent to go to Odessa to present my thesis to the Faculty of Natural Sciences, so as to obtain the degree of Doctor, without which I should only be "Docent."

(3) After I obtained this title, I would then accept the professorship, on condition that I had to lecture to only the fourth class two hours a week, and that I should have a laboratory in which the students might work all day.

The conditions were accepted.

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CHAPTER X

WHEN I reached Odessa, I went at once to see Professor Walz, to whom I owed my invitation from the University. He was a man of fifty years of age, with an exterior which led one to diagnose a weakness for spirituous liquor—a type of a few Russian professors who, having studied abroad and done work of a certain value, had gone back to Russia and lost some of their interest and their zeal. Their zeal for scientific research soon gave way to practical considerations, or to the struggles which went on between professors and the various parties in the ordinary life of a University. Many factors co-operated in this deterioration, such as, for instance, the great distances which made interchange of scientific ideas between specialists difficult, and the scarcity of these latter in Universities which had only lately been started. But the principal reason was the miserable pecuniary conditions under which the professors found themselves. In a country like Russia, where everything is dear, the salary of the ordinary professor was 8,000 roubles; the outside professor had 2,000 roubles, and the "Docent" only 1,000 roubles. (These salaries were still customary at the Universities, although in the other Ministries they had been changed.)

A student who had only just finished his studies received a post as Juge d'Instruction with 2,000 roubles a year, whilst the man who taught him (the Docent) and had worked for ten years before getting his place, only received 1,000 roubles, and without any hope of getting more as long as there was an outside professor, or one attached to the University, giving lectures on the same subject. The tragic part of this system was that this poverty was their lot just at the moment when, after long study in

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Russia and abroad, they hoped at last to enjoy the position of established married men with families. The professors at the University of Petersburg tried to improve their position by giving lessons in the day-schools of the town, but surely that is not the way in which a University professor should play his part as a scientific man!

The conditions under which I had accepted the invitation of the authorities obliged me to present a thesis which had to be approved by the Faculty, and which I had to defend publicly before the latter. My nomination depended on the success of my defence, but this success would have to be determined by the majority of votes in my favour given by the professors. In consequence nothing was settled until the appointed day of the defence, and in case of a fiasco, I should have to put up with having come a long and very expensive journey for nothing, not to speak of having spent weeks in a town which I disliked in every way. I need not say that all this depressed me pretty considerably, when suddenly I heard that my friend Demidoff was at Odessa, and that he had just been made President of the Court of Justice. I ran to see him, and the pleasure of finding him and his wife in a town where I had never expected their presence was so great that all my troubles seemed insignificant.

Five weeks were necessary to prepare my thesis and distribute it amongst the professors, and a week later Walz told me the date and hour fixed for the public defence. That meant, in any case, that the thesis was accepted. During this time I had met two or three professors, amongst whom was Duvernois, Professor of Roman Law, a charming man I had already met abroad.

Any man whose name is put down to defend his thesis is obliged to make a careful précis of the arguments before the beginning of the discussion, and I still remember how uncomfortable I felt at this prospect. Firstly, because, besides the professors, a large number of the public were

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present at these ceremonies, so that one had to consider their comprehension when explaining a scientific theory; and, secondly, because, having studied at Dorpat and abroad, I was not used to speaking in Russian on scientific matters.

At last the expected day came. I opened the door of the University half an hour before the time fixed for the ceremony. Walz, whom I met on the staircase, told me to go into the room where all the professors were assembled in their official robes. Some of them were quietly playing at cards, and they asked me to take a hand at jaralach while we waited for the public to assemble in the hall. I naturally refused, and asked Walz to introduce me to those professors whom I did not know. There were amongst them men of great celebrity, like the physiologist Setchenoff; Kovalevsky, well-known for his microscopic research work; and the zoologist Metchnikoff, who afterwards was under Pasteur in Paris.

At last they all rose and went into the hall and sat down on chairs opposite the little platform on which I had to stand. Lydia Demidoff, who was sitting in the front row, told me afterwards that she was dreadfully frightened for me, because I began in such a very weak voice, but that she soon became reassured when I began to defend my case against the attacks of my opponents. The battle raged fiercely, especially with the Professor of Physics, Schvedoff; but all went well for me, and there was applause from the whole hall. I came down from the platform, and Lydia, transported with joy, seized me by the arm and took me off, in evening dress and without a hat, to her house, where we lunched together, Demidoff being unfortunately ill.

I was unanimously elected. "I gave you a white ball," said Setchenoff, "because, as I was sitting behind Schvedoff, I saw how red his ears had become."

The next day I did *not* go to see the Curator of the University, Golubtzoff. I had been told that he had received his post from Count D. Tolstoy in recognition

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of the services that he had rendered to him as Arbiter of Peace when the distribution of the land to the peasants took place. I went to look at the laboratory and the rooms near it which I was to have. I found a young man who desired the post of my assistant—Monsieur Richavi; and I fixed the hours and dates for the two lectures which I had to give each week. In the room next the laboratory I found three students working hard at the microscope, and who therefore were missing the lessons of certain professors whose lectures were obligatory.

On my return home I wrote to my wife and told her everything that had happened, and requested her to come with the children, but not in too great a hurry, so that I might have time to find a lodging.

When I began to read my lectures and give scientific demonstrations, I soon found that the pupils were not much interested in science, so I was not astonished when they came to me one day expressing great satisfaction with the way in which I read my lectures, and saying that they hoped some day to induce me to give them a course of lectures on sociology! I replied that it was not my speciality, and I took advantage of the occasion to tell them some very disagreeable truths.

"Why did you come to the University?" I asked. "Certainly not for the interest you take in science. You who are all anxious for equality, why don't you choose some profession which is more in accordance with your aspirations? Why don't you become bakers like Deubner —that German whose shop you can see from the window, and who, thanks to the quality of his bread, holds all Odessa in the hollow of his hand? Look at the people fighting to get into his shop. Why don't you become tailors or shoemakers? It is because you want a diploma which gives you the right to consider yourselves men of a certain intelligence and which may even help you to get a job as a hanger-on of the Government."

I must confess that, in spite of the brutal way I spoke

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to them, they were never the least impolite to me. Most of them were "Popovitchi"—that is to say, sons of priests, who had got into the University by taking advantage of the law made by Count Tolstoy enacting that for four consecutive years seminarists could go direct to a University without having to go through an examination. They were young men without the slightest culture, and to appease certain professors, who complained that the students did not take off their hats to them, I explained that a great many of them did not do this from sheer shyness, because they did not know whether to take hold of their hats before or behind. The reason why I never had to complain of their behaviour towards myself was the following: I never went to church; I had never had a uniform; and had never called on the Curator of the University, and therefore some of them considered me half a revolutionary, and that gave me a certain standing in their eyes.

One day the Minister of Public Instruction, Count D. Tolstoy, came to Odessa. He said he wanted to know how the different studies at the University were progressing, and at one after the other of the different branches he sought to have some conversation with the professors. Certain events have remained in my mind connected with this visit, others I have forgotten; but I remember that Tolstoy with Golubtzoff the Curator was sitting one day on a sofa while the professors, seated or standing, were grouped around. I was just opposite Tolstoy, about two yards off.

"I am sorry to say," began the Count, "that I have never studied the natural sciences, but I should be obliged if one of you, sirs, would explain why it used to be rich young men who pursued the study of Natural Science, and why now it is only the poor ones who work at that branch."

Nobody answered. Tolstoy repeated the question a second time, but still there was silence. As none of the older professors answered—"Sir," I said, "may I do so?"

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Tolstoy turned towards me with interest, and the professors looked at me with much agitation.

"The reason why a rich man never comes into the scientific branch at present is because he knows that he will learn nothing seriously as long as the compulsory programme for all subjects is unaltered."

"What a thing to say!" cried several professors, with angry looks.

I went on calmly, without being disconcerted, not even understanding why they were so shocked at my opinions.

"The reason is that the programme of the lectures imposes more than twenty subjects on the students, and in consequence they cannot possibly know *one* thoroughly and they *don't* know one thoroughly," I continued firmly.

Tolstoy meanwhile was listening attentively, and sometimes looked with interest at the frightened faces of the other professors.

"Monsieur Wolkoff has only been here two months," remarked Metchnikoff in an irritated voice, "and cannot possibly know the students."

"Yes, yes—that is correct," came from all sides.

Tolstoy turned again in my direction.

"It is true," I said, "that I have only been here two months; but as I only teach science to the upper class—that is to say to the fourth—I have a chance of seeing how much those students know who are just leaving. I do not accuse the students, or, naturally, the professors——"

But scarcely had I said these words when such a tumult of anger arose and such furious exclamations came from all sides that I could think of nothing except the clamour of the Court against Tannhäuser when he declared that no man who had not been in the Venusberg knew what love meant.

When it was a little quieter, I went on. "I do not accuse anyone," I said, "except the compulsory programme of the sciences, and I maintain that it is owing to that that the students—with a few exceptions who have specia-

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lised at their own risk and peril—do not know in a microscope even what is the object-glass or what is the eye-piece." I then held my tongue.

When the protesting gentlemen were a little quieter, Setchenoff began to sound the praises of the University, maintaining that in certain sciences, as for example Chemistry, it was useless to go and study abroad, as Professor Verigo was good enough to satisfy the most critical mind. Several other laudatory remarks on the state of the University were expressed by other Professors.

At last Tolstoy rose, and with him Golubtzoff. The former bowed slightly to everybody, but came up to me and held out his hand and congratulated me on taking to heart the defects which I had explained. Then he went away, and Golubtzoff made me a deep bow and followed him.

The professors went out looking daggers at me. Nobody said "Good-bye" to me, and I went home alone.

Nothing could more characteristically show how in Russia the subordinates deceive their chiefs than this scene. In all Ministries, wherever one turns, when a chief really wants to know the state of affairs, the employees seem to have only one idea, and that is to make their chief believe that everything is going on splendidly.

After this I expected trouble with my pupils, because I was sure that the professors would tell them my opinion of their ignorance and thus annoy them, so I went at once to my laboratory and waited events. Suddenly Metchnikoff and Walz came in, and the former began to abuse me for my words. He spoke for a long time, complaining that I had accused the students of ignorance, whereas everyone knew that many of them were full of knowledge.

"I must confess," I said, "that I never expected for a moment that you would protest against the truth of what I stated, and which you know as well as I do." Knowing that in the next room there would be students working at the microscope, I began to speak loudly, so

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that they could hear. I said, "The number of subjects is so great that the students are obliged to rush from one lesson to the other, with the result that they assimilate nothing thoroughly, and leave knowing very little —with the exception of those students (from the point of view of their curator, bad ones) who specialise at their own risk and peril by going against the programme. These latter are rare exceptions; the majority finish at the University with very little real knowledge."

At this moment the three students who were working in the next room opened the door, and addressing me, said, in the presence of Metchnikoff: "We entirely share your opinion, sir. We have specialised in the microscope, but we do not know how on earth we are going to pass the other examinations that we shall have to go through."

Nothing could have suited me better than this statement of the students made before Metchnikoff. They had heard my words well enough to rectify, if necessary, any exaggerated reports that any professor might spread about me, and this probably happened, for I never heard a word more of the little episode.

My friend Demidoff was at this time getting ready to go on a long tour of inspection which was to last several weeks. It was the first time since marriage that he had been separated from his wife. The idea of leaving her alone made him so miserable that he begged me to go and live in their house, to which I consented with joy. When Demidoff left, I went to his apartments, where Lydia arranged a small room for me, and I spent several weeks with her in great and sincere friendship, until one day a telegram from my wife came announcing her arrival at the station in Odessa, and I then went back to my own apartment.

After we had engaged servants and arranged our house, we began to lead a regular existence in a place where neither my wife nor myself knew anyone and where conditions of life were very different from those in Germany, where we had lived for several years. During the

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next two or three weeks we were settling down. Demidoff, who had finished his tour, came back to Odessa. His wife wrote and asked me not to go to see him as he was seriously ill and confined to bed. A few days later, however, she sent a card round begging me to come at once. The brevity of this card frightened me. Lydia was waiting on the staircase, and seizing me by the hand she dragged me to her husband, who was lying in bed, breathing with great difficulty.

"Look, look!" she said. "What is the matter? Oh, my God! What is it? Do you know? Our doctor has gone to find a colleague to have a consultation and they will come back at once."

She said this, trying to keep back her heavy sobs.

Demidoff, lying on his right side, was absolutely motionless, but he knew me and in a feeble voice asked me to say something funny.

"When I see you like this, my dear friend, I cannot think of anything funny," I answered.

At this moment the two doctors arrived, and I asked Lydia to go away while they examined him. I remained in the room. They thought I did not understand what they were saying, but I heard the doctors speak to each other in German, in a low voice.

"You are quite right; this is diphtheria. The kidneys are already attacked," said the one who had been called in for the consultation. "In five hours the man will be dead."

The feelings I experienced in hearing this inexorable sentence are impossible to describe. I was losing a friend, but what was that in comparison with the agony that Lydia had to go through, and how on earth was I to tell her?

The doctors went out, and I followed them. Lydia, breathing hard, was waiting near the door.

"You must give him a little hot milk," said one of them, smiling the smile that doctors smile when there is no hope. "Yes. It is a very serious case, but one cannot say anything yet."

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Lydia listened without saying anything. She knew that the doctors were deceiving her, but she did not dare insist on being told the truth.

The idea that the dying man had only a few hours to live and that only a few minutes remained to them to say good-bye for ever, so upset me that I took the doctors into another room and asked them to wait, for I was afraid that if she heard the truth, Lydia would faint. Then, going back to her, I said: "Time is very precious. You must be brave, Lydia. Only a few minutes remain for your husband. Go and speak to him—perhaps he has something important to say to you."

Choking with sobs and almost mad with grief, she dragged herself to her husband's room and fell on her knees by the bed, without being able to speak a single word. Kneeling beside her, sobbing too, was Katia, her faithful and intelligent servant, such as one often found then in Russia. I hoped that Lydia would manage to control herself and speak, but she simply could not. She was sobbing so much that her husband, in a scarcely audible voice, said, "Why do you cry?"

This went on for twenty minutes, during which I stayed in the next room, with the door open, writing a letter to a friend of Demidoff's, telling her of the awful misfortune that I was witnessing. The cries and sobs of the two women did not cease, and I made up my mind to take Lydia into the next room, to explain to her the necessity of asking the dying man if he wanted to say any last words.

She could not speak, but with frantic gestures she made me understand that I must speak to him, because she had not the strength, so I went back to him. "My friend, you are very ill," I said, taking his hand. "Have you no instructions to give?—or anything you want? Try to speak, my dear friend."

He made a great effort, and in a scarcely audible voice said, "Don't abandon Lydia—house at Moscow mortgaged," and then he was silent. I waited ten minutes, but he did not say another word.

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It was eleven o'clock in the morning, and I left the dying man with Katia. When Lydia saw me she got up, dried her tears, and spoke to me in a persuasive tone. "You know my nature," she said. "I am a savage, uneducated, indolent. You know, if there is anything worth having in me, I owe it all to him. Without him life is impossible —it is useless—it is pointless. I cannot and will not live without him. Do you understand? I won't. I beg you to get me poison. If you are a real friend, you will do it. What is the good of friendship if in such a moment we do not help each other?"

I saw that she was ready for anything and would do anything to procure the poison, and that if she was stopped, she would find some other means of killing herself, if one left her alone. What on earth was I to do? What could I think of? If I left her, I felt sure I would not see her again. If I could only get hold of her imagination and provoke some other sentiment capable of removing the idea of self-destruction with which her mind was full! One must find out some method, however brutal, of turning her thoughts in another direction.

"Yes," I said, "I understand. It is true your nature is savage and one that only he knew how to control, calm, and Europeanise; but in spite of that you are still a passionate creature, vibrating and full of unknown forces, and I am quite certain that in the years to come you will have happy days. That is why I will not get you poison."

While I spoke she looked at me with an air of utter contempt, but when I finished this little speech by raising my voice and saying (I admit that I felt a beast as I said it), "You will marry again," her beautiful face, reminding me of the statue of Juno, was so transfigured by a wave of hatred towards me that she became really ugly, and was silent. For ten seconds we looked at each other, then in a calm voice she said, "I shall never forgive you those words."

I knew that I must go, that I could not continue this sort of thing, but I now had the conviction that her

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thoughts would turn from suicide because she was filled with hatred against a friend who had misunderstood her.

I then went to look for a place of refuge for the poor woman, because it was necessary to take her the same day to somebody who would offer her hospitality, in spite of the fear of infection. I myself could not take her home because of my children, and also her hatred for me made the idea impossible. Three of their oldest friends refused to see Lydia, for at this moment, the discoveries of Behring and Roux having not yet been made, diphtheria was considered an incurable complaint.

I decided to go to Count Alexander Gregorievitch Strogonoff, a man of over eighty, who had an exceedingly good position at Odessa and had the greatest esteem for Demidoff. He had been a soldier and had several times held important posts, and his standing was even more established by the fact that his son had married the Grand Duchess Marie Nikolaévna, daughter of the Emperor Nicholas I. At Odessa, so far away from Petersburg, Count Strogonoff had almost the power of a sovereign, and he indulged in certain eccentricities which in other mortals would not have been permitted. His aversion, for instance, from shaking hands was perhaps absurd, but I think it was based on an idea of equality. "Why should you give your hand to Peter," he said, "if you are not going to give it to Paul?" I would not swear, however, that in his inmost thoughts he did not consider that in comparison with himself everybody was so unimportant that it really was useless to do so. In any case, on this question he was very strict. Men who knew his little weaknesses submitted without protest, but ladies sometimes felt hurt and told him about it, but he declared with perfect seriousness that "his hands were cold." On the whole, he was an eccentric man, but of a nobility of character beyond reproach.

Strogonoff had already heard the news, and he and his sister, Madame Poletika, who lived with him, were per-

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fectly splendid. "Let her use our house as her own," said the old gentleman.

I begged this good Count to help me, for I had only just arrived at Odessa, and having spent most of my life abroad I simply knew nothing about a number of questions which had to do with religious ceremonies. Lydia was absolutely incapable of doing anything, and even her best friends, the Volodkovitchs, did not dare receive her in their house and were too frightened to go and help her in her home, and I had not the slightest idea how to arrange for the funeral service in the apartment of the dead man.

"Tell the undertaker," said the Count, "that you think it necessary to take the body to the church and the cemetery in the early morning, because in an illness like diphtheria one cannot be too careful."

"One other question, sir. You knew and admired the character of my friend Demidoff; tell me frankly, don't you think that the most quiet and modest funeral is what he would have preferred?"

"I agree with you," said the Count, "and am of the same opinion. For the service of the night before, I will engage one priest and no deacons, and you will order the same to-morrow to attend at the church and the cemetery."

When I went back to the house of Demidoff to give some orders, I met a number of functionaries, who surrounded the hall-porter asking him what time the burial was to take place, and wanting to know if they were to take part in it. I was already up the stairs when I heard the porter tell these men—pointing me out—that they had to ask me.

"Gentlemen," I said, "if you knew Demidoff as I knew him, you would understand that in avoiding every kind of official demonstration you would give him the greatest proof of your devotion to his memory."

They all bowed and went away.

I then went to Strogonoff and asked him to forbid Lydia to go to the cemetery.

The next day the head undertaker came to see me and told me how very distressed he was not to be able to show

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the Odessa public, by taking advantage of the death of a man in so eminent a position, what a magnificent thing a funeral could be. He obviously hoped that I would reverse my decision to have, what he considered, a third-class ceremony. It was seven o'clock in the morning, and I told him not to waste his time, to take the measure for the coffin on me, and to get it taken to the house of the deceased and later to the cemetery.

On the day of the funeral the coffin was covered with so many flowers that one could not see its shape. Three people stood round the coffin: Count Strogonoff—splendid old man—tall, thin, in his military uniform; I on his right, and the faithful Katia kneeling on his left. Only one priest officiated, and there was no choir, although the choir-men were there standing some distance off. Behind us, at the far end of the church, not daring to come near, there were a quantity of officials from the Ministry of which Demidoff was the head. They had come out of pure curiosity and without having put on their brilliant uniforms. What interested them was to see this unique funeral. Presently the head of the choir asked me in a low voice whether the choir was to follow the coffin to the grave. I did not know enough of the ways of my country to be able to answer, so I asked the Count if it was necessary.

"What will it cost?" he said.

"Fifty roubles," said the choirman.

"No; it is unnecessary," said the Count, to my great joy.

It would be impossible to say how glad I was to have met a man who held the same views as I did, and whom nobody could dare to suspect of having any other wish but to keep absolutely in line with the formalities prescribed by the Church, at the same time retaining a biblical simplicity exempt from all social hypocrisy.

When the service was over, they carried the coffin to the grave, and we followed it. One other joined us—Feldau, the musician, whom we knew to be devoted to the dead man.

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When it was over, the employees of the Ministry who were waiting at the far end of the Church quietly passed into the courtyard and waited some way off from Strogonoff's carriage. The Count put Katia into the carriage, and then, turning to the men around, he said, "Gentlemen, when I am dead, that is the burial that I should like to have." After which he entered his carriage and left.

I was terribly worn out and needed rest myself, but the terror of thinking that I might carry the infection to my own house prevented me from having any peace for a long time.

Poor Lydia was still with the Strogonoffs, but after what had passed between us I felt that I could not go and see her. I saw her before she went to Petersburg, but do not remember what we said to each other.

The Demidoff couple were very well known in society, and their adoration for each other had inspired much sympathy. The Empress was very sorry for Lydia, and to help her she gave her occupation for both heart and brains. The poor widow was made President of the Red Cross Society at Jassy, Moldavia, a very important town during the war with Turkey. Lydia accepted this post with joy and put her whole soul into the work of alleviating the sufferings of our soldiers.

In looking back on that far-off time, I have tried to analyse the sentiments which made me take the funeral of Demidoff so very seriously. Why was I so obstinate in trying to eliminate every kind of luxury? Why did I make such a fuss over so unimportant a question? Why did I not show a complete indifference with regard to the procedure which custom has established in the matter of our disappearance from this world? To-day, it would be very difficult for me to reply to this question without taking into consideration the influence which the development of new social conditions then disturbing my country exercised on opinion and taste. At the time of the proclamation of the emancipation of the serfs, which

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established social relations between the nobles and the peasants, there existed in Russia two other big classes—the clergy and the Mestchani. This latter class, which was generally formed by serfs who had been liberated by their masters, comprised the urban population, and was mostly composed of tradesmen, from the hotel-keeper, the tailor, the veterinary surgeon, and every kind of artisan, down to the chimney-sweep.

These individuals were more or less uneducated, but amongst the merchants there were millionaires who did not even know how to sign their names. This, however, did not prevent their directing big concerns in which the spoken word was as secure as the written document. Once the Emancipation had come, the whole system of governing the country had to be changed, and the Zemstvo was instituted in 1864. It was a kind of Commission composed of people elected and presided over by the Marshals of the Nobility, whose task was to settle questions relating to economic affairs, primary schools, roadways, charities, and in fact all matters of common interest. (The English equivalent would probably be the County Council, if that were presided over by a nobleman.) The members of the Zemstvo could be elected from any class, and these classes soon became aware of their rights and took care to use them.

After the ten years which were necessary to complete the work of emancipating the peasants, and once they were established on the lands of which they were to be in future the only masters, the institution of Arbiters of Peace, the members of which had worked at this reform with a zeal and abnegation never before equalled in our country, ended. During twenty years after this the affairs of the peasants were confided in each district, as I have said before, to Commissions under the presidency of the Marshal of the Nobility of the province, and meetings were held under the presidency of the Governor. But these Commissions and these Assemblies were not thoroughly satisfactory, and the Government, not wishing

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to leave the Volosti without any control, created chiefs, to whom was given the name of Zemsky Natchalnik.

The intellectual work done in the country before the emancipation of the serfs, and the efforts of the more advanced minds of the time, who were trying to introduce a more European culture into the country, produced a great impression on all classes. The fact that for the future they could buy land—which up till then had only belonged to the nobles—created in them interests which radically changed their mode of life. The sons of priests and professional men began to understand the practical value of knowledge, and cried out for schools. It is certain that these two classes gained much advantage by the reforms, which, although they changed the relations between the nobles and the peasants, did not really very much alter their way of life. The peasants stayed on their lands, and the nobility, more or less impoverished, went on as usual, trying to obtain posts in Government service.

The merchants began to buy the big estates, which the nobles sold to them as they stood, even with the family portraits. The younger merchants drew attention to themselves in different ways, many of them by dissipating the fortunes that their fathers had made. Their only interest was in horses, horse-racing, light women, and dissipation of every kind. They drank a great deal, and their preposterous behaviour was mostly due to the desire to show off as much as they dared to do. One particularly popular act was to break the mirrors of the restaurants, which were often very valuable, and the idea of being able to do it by merely paying the value to the proprietor was a great temptation to these drunken young men. Two young merchants, for instance, having eaten and drunk a great deal, and with no subjects for conversation, sat quiet. "Will you pay half?" suddenly said one of them.

"All right," answered the other.

Then a bottle of champagne was thrown at the biggest

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looking-glass, which of course shattered into a thousand pieces.

Once at Venice my doctor begged me to go and help at the Hôtel Bauer, where a young Russian had become quite mad and was breaking all the looking-glasses. He did not speak any other language and nobody knew what to do. "I should not bother about that particular form of madness," I said to my doctor. "Tell the proprietor to hand in a large bill for what the young man has broken, and you will see that he will pay it without a word." And this happened exactly as I had said, to the great astonishment of everybody there.

The Government, at the head of which were men with liberal ideas, did the best they could. With few exceptions, all the schools were open to everybody.

The Universities were of course the principal centres from which culture could radiate through the whole Empire, but unfortunately the studies pursued there did not altogether fulfil their purpose, firstly, because the programmes of study were not yet correlated to the needs of everyday life, and, secondly, because the number of students sent out from these Universities to become schoolmasters in the public and other schools was not sufficient. To remedy this last evil the Minister of Instruction, Count Tolstoy, had the idea of allowing seminarists to pass into the Universities without taking examinations, as I have already mentioned. The introduction of this measure did a great deal of harm to the more advanced students, because it obliged the professors to adapt their lectures to the comprehension of entirely uneducated young men; so that although there were serious students who took advantage of the laboratories, which were often excellent, and the teaching that the scientific men fresh from abroad were only too ready to give them, yet this class was the exception and scarcely noticeable amongst the majority, who were mostly sons of priests and uneducated professional men—people with a grievance, in fact, who wanted equality above every-

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thing. But as this was not an easy thing to get, they tried to make themselves look superior by assuming the name of "Intelligentsia," by which appellation they expressed frankly what they thought of other people. They all knew a little about the French Revolution and thought that they were predestined to play a great part in the future. As to opinions, they only believed in those they thought logical, but as these so-called logical opinions admitted no existing authority, and as they accepted into their ranks people who protested against any authority whatever, they spread discontent wherever they went. The Intelligentsia sprang up like toadstools. The Universities were opened to all who could pass the entrance examinations, which were made as easy as possible—and, so that the poor man could go there, the rich man of every social class created scholarships in his favour. Unfortunately these scholarships were not given to the most capable or the most deserving, but were bestowed on those who were natives of the towns or provinces of the donor.

The class usually known as the "bourgeoisie" was thus created by spreading everywhere a superficial culture. Prodigious ignorance had come to dominate every sphere of social activity. Everybody's ambition was to be somebody, and to be in the movement, but to do it cheaply and without giving oneself much trouble; and as all institutions, universities, and schools gave diplomas to any of their students who were leaving, there was a sort of race for diplomas all over Russia. The individual who had managed to get one thought himself a changed man, and he was really idiotic enough to believe in his own transformation and to take it seriously. But the diploma did not take in anyone who knew how very little effort was necessary to acquire it. The great mass of the people, however, ignored this, and it was they whom the candidates for the diplomas wished to impress.

The Intelligentsia was odious to everyone who saw through it, and these took an unholy pleasure in doing

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everything contrary to its wishes. For instance, the members of the Intelligentsia would have been delighted to criticise the sumptuous burial of a man of great position, and at the same time all the little officials would have been delighted to put on their uniforms and walk about the streets. That is really why I was so determined to eliminate every vestige of luxury at Demidoff's funeral. The fact that even a man like Count Strogonoff agreed with me more than shows that the desire to oppose the Intelligentsia was not rare in Russia.

Looking back, I see that already in 1882 I realised where it would lead Russia. The prophecies that I made then in a letter to the late Princess Cocona Bariatinsky (which her daughter Princess Olga has just sent me back) have proved only too true.

Here is the letter:

"VENICE, *1st July*, 1882.

"I thank you for your letter, dear and good Princess. I understand very well what is saddening you in our holy Russia. The fact is that you and I have no longer any place there, for we are amongst new people who think that the millennium has come. It is the reaction against the old days, and they strive for equality at any price. They think that happiness lies in that and they produce the 'Intelligentsia,' in immense masses, so that everybody shall know as much as everyone else. 'They do not even know how great is their own ignorance'; as Count Solloghoub said, speaking of the writer Boborykine.

"All these 'solemn meetings' only flatter the fancy of these children who are playing at being grown-up people. One can easily see that they will burn their fingers collectively; but to burn them the better, they will burn your houses and pictures and your art treasures. It is a generation that is abandoning honest work and is producing a class with rights, and rights which nobody will know how to use. Firstly, because it will be an inferior class. Secondly, because it will find no direct object for the practical application of its rights. And, thirdly, because it will find itself up against people with much greater intelligence. It is to-day a world-wide fight, not

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only that of miserable Russian provinces—America has shown us this already. Russia can only exist with a proletariat that is contented with little; that is the only possible thing in a country where the climate and means of communication are either mediocre or deplorable. Now they are producing a proletariat that will not be contented with a little, and which in consequence can only depress those who know how little it knows. When it realises this it will get angry, and there will be a general chaos. It will only be after a long time that the vague aspirations of the Intelligentsia of to-day will come to realise this and the development of our country will move on a sounder basis. Then people will be contented with less and the labourer will remain a labourer without trying to become something else. The mistress of the school will not think that she knows more than you do because she knows a little more geography and arithmetic, and the doctor and schoolmaster will know that they know scarcely anything. That is why all this reaching out towards intellectual things is saddening; they are not actuated by a real economic want, but by a historic want, and by reaction. They are climbing too high, and it is easy to foresee their fall. The nobility think that it is their duty to come and help this upward movement and make themselves the guardians of it, but anyone whose nature is higher or more sensitive realises the anachronism of his or her position.

"This is your case, my dear Princess, but you cannot do anything. The only thing you can do is to smile sadly at your pretty house and thank God each time that you see your beautiful things unharmed. . . . I will try to find you what you want [carved woodwork from Venice] to augment the collection of your European souvenirs which you are going to throw away on Grounowka." [1]

Twenty-three years later, when the Revolutionists began to invade Russia, my children wrote to me a letter from Petersburg couched in these terms:

"DEAR PAPA,

"Russia to-day, being in a critical position, feels more than ever the necessity of the presence and activities

[1] Property of the Princess in the Government of Kursk—to-day demolished.

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of its most cultivated children. The times we are passing through demand an almost superhuman combination of force and talent, and where are we to find them except amongst the clearest and most logical intelligences that the Slav race possesses? The want of level heads is disgusting; the want of knowledge of the world is deplorable; everyone, from the most intolerant reactionary to the most fanatical Anarchist, wanders about in an obscurity of vague and absurd ideas, incapable of getting out of the political, moral and intellectual chaos. In such a moment the presence of a strong and cultivated man is imperative. That is why we, your children, are writing to you, because we know the exceptional originality of your brains, the quickness of your repartee, the logic of your intelligence—in fact, all the high qualities by which you have been gifted by nature. We beg you to come to Petersburg at this, the right moment. All the political parties are being formed, and it would be easy for you to join at once the Party whose name is 'Soiouse,' 17 Oct.—and which we think is the one you would be most in sympathy with.

"Gavra, Kolia, Vera."

This was my reply to this letter.

"Venice, 13*th December*, 1905.

"My dear Children,

"As you have such a high opinion of my aptitude for thinking logically, let me tell you that, alas! I do not foresee any other issue for the horrible state of things which obtains in Russia at present than an era of inevitable catastrophe. It takes time before a Muscovite idealist who only yesterday believed in the writings of Father John of Kronstadt, and to-day imagines that he is an ardent revolutionary, can understand the value of the word 'liberty.' All these people—the Tolstoys, Troubetskoys, Petriks, Pavliks (Dolgorouky), and Heidens—are without any practical understanding of the meaning of Freedom. Such a conception can only be mastered by the observation and study of the conditions of life amongst people where liberty has taken root, and has developed little by little and is not merely a pass-word. They have not enough discernment to see the difference between desirable and possible things. Their soul, whether it is ardent or merely discontented, believes in Utopia all the more

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that Utopias attract failures of every kind, and that these failures (*Neoudatchniki*) flatter their leaders.

"The people who like to strike live in an atmosphere of infantile delusion, and it cannot be otherwise. Having brutally got rid of every kind of authority, they give their homage to a liberty which they do not realise is really unbridled licence. They will never grasp what this leads to until they have suffered under the inevitable friction caused by social claims improperly understood. It must be remembered that human stupidity, as Plutarch said, 'has no certain limits.'

"It was thus in the days of Plutarch and it is the same to-day. The struggles, the disappointments, and the misery which will follow this miserable time are inevitable. To be prepared for everything and to wait, is the only sensible thing to do. Any palliative will only retard the cure. To throw oneself into the struggle with these ideas would not help, but all the same I would have done it for love of good comradeship and to be in the swim—(*Mitmachen*, as the Germans say); but now my health will not allow me to do it, and I really have not the physical strength to come amongst you. I often ask myself if I shall have enough strength to take up painting again when I am completely ruined. I am better, of course, but you have no idea how much care I have to take to keep up this improvement."

But let us come back to Odessa. My lectures at the University went on, but the Botanical Gardens were a very long way from the University, and as the most elementary apparatus for vegetable physiology was wanting in the laboratory, the necessary conditions for working experiments were not favourable. My wife and I were living a life outside that of the other professors of Odessa. However, we soon made friends with the Volodkovitchs, the family consisting of M. Constantine and Madame Hélène. They had a delightful villa a short way from Odessa on rising ground overlooking the sea, with a magnificent view. Charming Poles came to their house, and as I had passed my childhood in Poland, there were many links between us which made our relations pleasant.

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In 1876 the family of Prince Victor Bariatinsky, his wife and three young girls, came to Odessa, to the great joy of the Volodkovitchs, who took immense pains to make their apartment comfortable. The presence of a woman at Odessa like the Princess Bariatinsky was enough to alter the existence of a good many people, myself amongst others. I do not remember where I met her, but I remember the effect she made upon me. She was a woman of about forty, with hair which had turned white as early as twenty-five, with a wonderful complexion of ivory and rose, and yellow-gold eyes with silky black eyebrows. Her mouth was large, with very red lips and strongly marked outline. She was not of a classical or severe beauty, but the combination of form and colouring, the values of which were heightened by the whiteness of her hair, framing a well-shaped oval, made her the joy of artists. Physically, this woman, whom everybody called "Cocona," was unique, and as to charm, nobody could be more seductive than she was. Full of talent for music and painting, she was extraordinarily modest, learning more than teaching and asking more than imparting her own knowledge. One met sometimes at the Volodkovitchs' and sometimes at the Bariatinskys', and occasionally spent whole evenings listening to the *Ring of the Nibelung*, which a pianist named Feldau, very clever at reading from the score, used to play to us. The Princess sang with a great deal of natural talent, especially Schumann's songs.

I must admit that the idea of giving lectures to young men who wanted anything at the University rather than science weighed more heavily upon me as time went on. I shall never forget the awful impression I had when, at the examinations, not one of my students could answer a question about the absorption of light by chlorophyll, or the modifications which the solar spectrum undergoes when the rays have passed through a solution of this substance, whose colouring matter creates the green of leaves. Not a single one of them had remembered the black line which appears in the red, although in my lectures

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I had shown them the spectrum both in its normal state and after the passage of the light through chlorophyll.

The fact that no one could remember a visual impression of only two or three months ago forced me to tell these young people a few painful truths. "As to this forgetfulness, sirs," I said to them, "I must say frankly that your brains are not yet elastic enough to receive impressions sufficiently strongly to retain them. I should not have thought it possible that a child of six years of age of a middle-class family whose parents had had three generations of intellectual culture could forget the effect of colour which he had seen only a few months ago. These generations I fear you have not got, my friends, and you leave the University completely ignorant, but with a diploma which gives you the right to consider yourself distinguished members of that 'Intelligentsia' which now pervades Russia. What marks am I to give you? You have been diligent and attended the lessons. Whose fault is it? It is theirs who let you come to the University or the programme of your studies. Another thing I must take into consideration is that many of you have perhaps scholarships which you may lose if you do not pass your examinations. This kind of examination is simply a farce. I shall consider it in that light and treat it like that, by giving each one of you the highest marks."

Anyone could understand that University life under such conditions was most antipathetic to me and took away all wish to stay at Odessa.

In May, Princess Bariatinsky went with her daughter Marie to Rome, and from there to Bayreuth, to be at the rehearsals of the *Nibelung*—composed by Wagner, performed in Wagner's own country, and with artists of his own choice.

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CHAPTER XI

WHEN the holidays began, I left with my wife and children to spend the summer in Switzerland. We went to Oberhofen, a delightful village on the Lake of Thun, from which there is a magnificent view over the Niesen, the Blümlisalp, the Eiger, the Mönch, and the Jungfrau. There were then only two pensions, the Oberhofen and the Moy. The first one had a little chalet as annexe, which we occupied. Nowadays Oberhofen is full of pensions, without speaking of those all along the banks of the lake, around which runs a tramway, whereby a great deal of the picturesqueness of the place is lost. The splendid castle still remains, but no longer belongs to the Counts Harrach. In 1876 the proprietor was a charming man who was devoted to art and had arranged a fine studio for himself. He passed all the summers in the castle with his wife, who was celebrated for her beauty. We were introduced to them; and for me, who cared so much for painting, his acquaintance was both useful and agreeable.

I kept thinking about the performance at Bayreuth, which would soon begin. Having been a zealous Wagnerian since my childhood, and knowing already the *Ring of the Nibelung* pretty well, thanks to the musical evenings that the Volodkovitchs used to give, with Feldau playing, I really went through mental tortures when I knew that I could not hear them in a theatre constructed specially for their performance, and with artists chosen by Wagner himself. The truth was that a ticket for the four evenings cost 800 thalers, and I really could not afford it, so in order not to dwell upon it, I filled up my days with excursions and painting. But what was my joy when, coming home one day, I found a letter from a cousin of

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my wife, offering me a ticket. There was not much time to lose, and I went off by the earliest train, arriving at Bayreuth just in time for the first performance. It was very difficult to find a lodging, because nothing had yet been arranged for visitors to the little town and the hotels were naturally overflowing, so I decided to walk about the streets, hoping to find some compassionate creature looking out of one of the windows whom I might beg to put me up for four nights, and soon I did chance upon this kind soul in the person of a schoolmaster.

The Bariatinskys, who had already left Bayreuth, had only been there for the rehearsals. In the town I found Mestchersky with Miss Herzen, and Gabriel Monod with his wife, sister of the former. A letter from Princess Bariatinsky, which I found on arrival, told me that I must make the acquaintance of Madame Cosima, to whom she had already spoken of me. I was asked to one of the evening parties which used to be given at Wahnfried, Wagner's villa, and I had the pleasure of meeting Cosima arm-in-arm with Baroness Schleinitz, in a room alone. They were two young women of very different character, but both intelligent and charming. Madame Wagner immediately asked me what my impressions of the opera were. I told her that of all the musicians who had ever existed, the Master was certainly the greatest philosopher, but, thank God, he was not so great a philosopher that his eminence prevented his being at the same time the greatest musician. I was introduced to Wagner, and we shook hands without speaking.

At the end of the performance they had arranged for a supper party to be given in Wagner's honour. Of course I went to this supper, which took place in two great rooms, of which the floors were not on the same level—one was five or six feet higher than the other. These halls were united by steps, and the long and very narrow tables for the artists, placed in the higher of the two halls, came right up to the last steps. Wagner was sitting near this step, so, in spite of the different levels,

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everybody who was in the lower hall could see him. Richter was opposite him, but the other artists sitting at the same table were almost invisible. Near the steps in the lower hall, and, so to speak, at Wagner's feet, there was a great round table occupied, as far as I remember, by intimate friends of the Wagner family. Besides Madame Cosima there were Baroness Schleinitz, Baroness Meyendorff (*née* Princess Gortchakoff), Baroness Wöhrmann, Mademoiselle Sophianos, and others. Amongst the men were Liszt, Schleinitz, and the young Count Apponyi, who later on was so distinguished a diplomat. Presently Wagner got up and made an excellent speech, in which he alluded to musicians of different nationalities and declared that he had tried to make a German national music. Someone in the hall replied that the future would be the only criterion by which anyone could judge whether the German nation wished to consider his music as national.

Wagner then went on to speak of Liszt and his great gratitude to the man to whom he owed so much; upon which Liszt rose and declared that he considered Wagner to be in music as great as Shakespeare is in literature. Whereupon Wagner went down a few steps towards Liszt, who came up a few, and they embraced, to the applause of the audience.

Count Apponyi then made a very charming speech, in which he compared Wagner to Siegfried and Art to Brünnhilde.

Then the Master rose, and, giving his arm to Baroness Schleinitz, began to go round the tables to thank the artists for all they had done. Meanwhile someone had put a crown of silver laurels on his head, which he immediately transferred to Baroness Schleinitz's head, and thus they continued their tour of the room. I do not remember who suggested this crown, but it might have been the famous Madame Lucca, who, having bought the rights of all Wagner's works for Italy for a ridiculously small sum—people said ten thousand francs—was trying to express her gratitude cheaply.

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The next day I left Bayreuth to go back to Switzerland, where my family still remained, and after several weeks of delicious life amongst the mountains we started the long and dreary journey back to Odessa.

At the University, lectures began again, and I started my work at the laboratory. What struck me when I came back to Russia was the spirit of the public, which, politically speaking, became daily more and more nationalist, bellicose, and aggressive. Everyone began to talk about the necessity of making war against Turkey, and started arguments with the Muscovite ideas of Aksakoff, Samarine, and Katkoff on the heaven-sent mission of the Russian people, the necessity of taking the church of St. Sophia and raising the Cross upon it, and the legend of the testament of Peter the Great.

These opinions spread like a contagious malady, becoming more and more general, so that very few people escaped untouched.

Thus the whole winter passed in a feverish expectation of an event which was to happen in the spring. So far back as the beginning of April 1870, a Russian army had been concentrated in Bessarabia, but peace terms with Turkey were being discussed while all the time preparations were made, *sub rosa*, to surprise them with some unexpected manœuvres. The day that Nélidoff gave the Grand Vizier the declaration of war, the Russian Army crossed the Pruth (24th of April 1877). It must be admitted that the defects of the Russian character, its want of foresight and its ignorance, played a great part, not only during the preparations for war, but during the war itself. From the beginning, when the Russian guns were undeniably inferior to those of the Turks, to the end, when, owing to the unpreparedness of our diplomats, the Russians found their way to Constantinople without the right of entry, such facts as these were the logical result of national faults of character.

The public was kept in ignorance of the most elementary truths about the war, and when anyone told you

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anything you might be quite sure it was either exaggerated or false. Also the Generals, important and unimportant, when asked the most simple and innocent questions, such as, "How many soldiers have gone across the frontier?" —"How many were killed in the first battle?"—"When are you going to have reinforcements?"—never answered properly. It appeared not to interest them! There was, however, one man who knew perfectly well what was happening, and was interested in everything that was going on, from the smallest detail to the most serious question. This man was a stranger, Colonel Gaillard, attached to the staff of the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaévitch, and the Colonel who had been in charge of General Bazaine when he was taken prisoner. When I wanted to know something of importance, I always turned to him, and his reply was invariably accurate.

One day when I was dining with the young wife of old General Semeko, head of the defences of South Russia, she and her sister, pretty Mlle Roslavlieff, asked me if I would like to see the new lighting apparatus which the military authorities had installed in a little fort near Odessa. This was a kind of searchlight and was to be used for sighting strange vessels which might be trying to bombard the town during the night. Presently they came to tell us that everything was ready and that they were only awaiting the arrival of the General's wife to throw the first searchlight over the sea, so we drove off at once. After the town was left behind, we proceeded in the dark, and finally came to the little fort, where several soldiers told the coachman to stop as that was the best place for seeing the spectacle. We waited a quarter of an hour in the dark, but nothing happened. Suddenly we noticed that a soldier was standing immobile at the salute close to the carriage.

"Well?" said the General's wife. "Why is there no light?"

"Your Excellency," replied the soldier, "something has burst" ("Tchto-to-soskotchilo"). The word "burst"

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does not explain the idea. "Something did not come off" is perhaps the better expression. That is typical of Russia, I thought—something does not come off, just at the moment when something ought to come off. We went back to the house.

Count Levachoff became President and Prince Anatole Gagarine the Vice-President of the Red Cross. One began to pass the wounded men through without interruption, as the military hospitals which were installed at Odessa sent the Red Cross any men they had over. The hospital was in the middle of the town and contained 700 beds, and Count Levachoff made an admirable President. He was always at work right up to the middle of the night and early in the morning was back at the hospital. Countess Levachoff made the most tremendous efforts to get money. She arranged parties and charities and went to see the wounded men almost every day. Prince Gagarine did not remain long as Vice-President, and I was put in his place.

Our life at Odessa changed very much from the day the post was given to me. I of course went on giving my lectures, but my soul was in the war, and the more so that Odessa was in the front row, as it were, for any events that might happen. We expected to be bombarded by the Turks every day, and batteries were established in different parts of the town to defend us. The public was ready to fly at the first cannon-shot, but as it was not very easy to escape with small children, I sent my family to Kichineff and I stayed on alone at Odessa.

The Volodkovitch villa was situated on a bit of land which stood out to sea, and I settled there to await the Turks, with Volodkovitch and his wife. I put up a big telescope belonging to the University there, and we often spent whole nights watching the sea and the ships lit up by the searchlights. One day Madame Volodkovitch's brother, Stephan Drzevedsky, a very capable engineer of about thirty, who had already gained fame at the Exhibition of Vienna by certain apparatus he had invented, was

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with us. "This is a stroke of luck for you," I said, while we were sitting scanning the sea. "Now is your chance, the opportunity has come to you—invent a submarine boat to pass beneath the big ships and blow them up."

The next day I was still in bed when Drzevedsky came in, telling me that the "little boat" was already thought out, and the only thing wanted was money with which to carry out his experiments. When we talked about it during the day, Volodkovitch, who did not think much of his brother-in-law's talents, said that he would consider anyone an ass who gave him the money. However, I spoke to Rodokonaki, who supplied him with 10,000 roubles, and Drzevedsky set to work. The work took about a year, and the value of the result could not be determined until after the war was over.

The public liked to amuse itself and was quite content to let the payment for its amusements go to the Red Cross, but very few people gave any large sums. In a country where the Government is autocratic and the Governor represents the Emperor, such donations were often looked upon as mere snobbishness, and this prevented people from giving. Many criticised the donations given to Count Levachoff from one point of view or another—and it often looked as if they were given more to please the Countess, or even the wife of the Governor, than to help the poor wounded men. But at Odessa there were donors of another kind. One day a charming man of middle age and very rich, named Balachoff, arrived. Count Levachoff introduced him to me, saying that he had promised to help the Red Cross Society at Odessa. That evening we spoke of the matter and asked the gentleman what sum he thought he could give.

"That depends on my income."

"But cannot you discover the minimum of your income and give according to that?"

"No; all I can say is, that it depends on my income."

I saw him afterwards. "Well, Monsieur Balachoff, have you learned anything further about your funds?"

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"No; I cannot say anything."

"But when will you know?"

"I cannot answer that."

"Well, when you have the information, will you tell us? for it is absolutely necessary for us to know how much we can spend and when we can spend it."

The Countess also bore a grudge against Periclès Rodokonaki, because, in spite of his immense wealth, he never gave anything to the Red Cross at Odessa. They asked him to dinner and were charming to him, but nothing seemed to have any effect. Being a cultivated man, he did not want to let people think that he was pleased at civilities which had a double purpose. There were then very few people in Russian society who did not court the bureaucracy and the people in power, and to emphasise his point of view, Rodokonaki made a large contribution to the Red Cross in a neighbouring province.

One day an old comrade from Heidelberg, Prince Mestchersky, who was working in the Red Cross at Kischeneff, came to my laboratory to ask me to help him. A celebrated Russian scientist named Miklouha Maklai, he said, who had worked for some years on a desolate island, now wanted to return to Russia, but to do so and to bring back the ethnographic collection which he had amassed he needed about 10,000 roubles. He had managed to get together about 5,000, but wanted another 5,000. "I got into communication with Miklouha," he said, "and, furnished with a letter from him and a lot of documents, I went to everybody I could think of to attempt to get together this sum, but nobody would help. It was the same at Odessa. No one wanted to hear about Miklouha."

"Sit down in that armchair," said I, "and wait for me; I will come back in half an hour."

I went to Rodokonaki and told him the story. "Look at the papers," I said.

"I don't want to see them," he replied. "Tell me what you think of it."

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"I know that he is a learned man, and, unlike many Russians, who never leave their country, he has established himself for several years on an unknown island to work out certain scientific questions. What his collection is worth, I do not know."

"Tell me—if you were in my place, would you give the money?"

"Yes," I said.

"Here it is," he said, "but on one condition—that you do not mention it to anyone."

"Go to the bureau of Rodokonaki," I said to Mestchersky, when I got back to the laboratory. "You will have your five thousand roubles."

Mestchersky would not believe me, but he got them, and Miklouha came back.

When the war was over, our hospital was closed, and we all hoped very much that we should not have to receive the typhus patients who had been pouring into the towns; but suddenly we received a telegram announcing that a ship was bringing us 3,000 patients of every kind of typhus. I shall never forget that day. We had to receive the patients, take them off the ship and put them somewhere, and feed them—but how, and where? In the end we put them in the little fort, on straw and in the open air, and for twenty-four hours we had nothing to give them but bread. Little by little, however, thanks to the incredible energy with which Levachoff worked, we were able to raise the necessary buildings to look after the sick men better, and at last we had a town of little huts, the roofs of which could be opened and shut at will, and each held twenty beds. The space between these houses being rather large and the number of the patients about 2,500, we were forced to construct a light railway to bring their food from the kitchen. The mortality was only 3 or 4 per cent. One factor of great assistance was the Marsala wine which we received straight from Italy. Each day we got rid of about 300 men, who were immediately replaced by others. During my time as Vice-President, there were

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27 doctors and 125 assistants, of whom 60 caught typhus, but I do not remember whether any of them died.

One fine day, who should arrive at the door of my drawing-room but Lydia Demidoff, dragging after her a gentleman whom I did not know. "Embrace me, my dear friend," she said. "You were right, and it is to you I come to first, before anyone else in Odessa. Here is my husband, Prince Michel Dolgorouky."

We talked together, but did not feel very much at ease. Between my memories and hers the difference was too great.

Since the death of Demidoff, Lydia had passed through an exciting time, full of drama and even of terror, for she had worked with admirable energy in helping to alleviate the terrible sufferings of our wounded soldiers. While she was going through all this, the Red Cross Society of Odessa, where I was Delegate, had shut the hospital for the wounded soldiers and was only taking in ordinary patients. The amount of suffering that Lydia had seen during these eighteen months must have been much greater than mine, and probably it was that which made her indifferent to her own past sorrows. When I looked at Lydia I could only think of Demidoff, whereas she had already learned not to think much about him. Dolgorouky was quite another kind of man; not a Freethinker like Demidoff, but, on the contrary, strictly Orthodox.

They went together to visit the tomb of Demidoff. "Why did they do that?" said somebody. "To thank him for not living longer!" said somebody else.

During the war I do not know how the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaévitch [1] did his duty as a soldier. I know that many Generals distinguished themselves, some even became celebrated, but I also know that there was animosity between them. One day at the Levachoffs', General Prince Imeritinsky went for Skobeleff without caring the least what he said, and declared that instead of

[1] Not to be confused with the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaévitch, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies in 1914.

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coming to help him in an encounter in which his army (Imeritinsky's) had already suffered enormously, Skobeleff waited for the moment when he was obliged to retire, and then attacked the Turks so as to take to himself all the credit and glory. Skobeleff, in any case, gained European fame, but I believe that he was not very generous towards his colleagues.

All this time Drzevedsky was working hard at his apparatus in the factory of a man called Blanchard. Unfortunately the war was over before it was possible to arrange a public demonstration to exhibit it, but at last the day came when this took place. His sister Marie, Levachoff, and I went at the appointed hour on board a vessel from which we were to witness the operation. The machine was by the side of the vessel, but one could see nothing on the surface of the water except a tube sufficiently big to allow the body of a man to pass through, and a large glass bell. The rest of the apparatus was under the water. There were a good many sailors on board, with Captain Baranoff. Suddenly Drzevedsky appeared, dressed as a cook, with a white cap on his head—he never did anything without introducing a comic note. He raised his cap to us with a laugh and disappeared down his tube. They wanted to tie a rope to his apparatus so as to know where he was all the time and to be able to save him in case there was trouble; but he refused, screwed down the glass bell over his head, and went under the water. Five minutes went by and he did not reappear; everyone became rather anxious, and his sister Marie, who was standing by me, became paler and paler, and I thought she was going to faint, when suddenly up came the bell. There was great applause, as the experiment had absolutely succeeded.

A short while afterwards the Admiralty began to interest themselves in the affair and asked Drzevedsky to make more serious experiments. He was to get away from one boat, go through the water to another at a certain distance, pass under it, and come up the other side.

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The authorities assembled one day to see this new demonstration. Drzevedsky asked how many feet of water there were between the vessel and the bottom. "Seventeen feet," they replied.

"That is all right," he said, "because my apparatus requires not less than ten feet of water."

When he reached the other boat, he knew by the shadow on the water where he was, and began to go down so as to get under the keel, when suddenly he heard the "speaking tube," which was above the glass bell, crushing against the keel, and understood by that that he was caught between the vessel and the bottom of the sea. He pedalled as hard as he could with his feet, but nothing moved. He admitted to me afterwards that he was so terrified his forehead was covered with a cold sweat, especially as there was only a very small quantity of oxygen, and had he to remain in this position long, he knew he would be suffocated. Happily the sailors on board, guessing that something was wrong, all made a rush to one side, and their weight tilting the ship permitted Drzevedsky to back out and come up to the surface again. There was general consternation; they measured the distance between the bottom of the vessel and the ground, and found that it was only ten feet, instead of seventeen feet. So then there were complaints and punishment of the responsible persons. In Russia, whenever one wishes to obtain accurate information with regard to any point, the national indolence must be taken into consideration.

The heir to the throne, the Grand Duke Alexander, wanted to see this apparatus working, so it was taken in the middle of the winter to Gatchina, where the ponds never freeze. One day somebody met Drzevedsky in Petersburg, carrying something under his cloak. "What have you there?"

"A bouquet of roses, which I am going to find at the bottom of the pond, to present to the Grand Duchess."

One night when we had been staying up at the Levachoffs'—as we always did—until one o'clock, the Count

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asked me to wait until the Countess had gone to bed. "You who go about and mix with a different class from that of the Government officials and military men—tell me what you think on the following question. In a few days they are going to try some revolutionaries and expect trouble from a hostile crowd which will gather round the house where the Tribunal sits. Should I, as the Military Governor, go amongst the crowd in order to take part in the measures for maintaining or restoring order?"

"It seems to me," I replied, "that the question is very simple. You must stay at home and take the necessary measures for seeing that the police do not go to sleep, but do their duty. It is absurd to think that the Military Governor should act as a policeman and run round the house where they are holding the Tribunal."

Levachoff did not answer, but I think that he did as I said, and unfortunately this procedure caused him a lot of unpleasantness and was perhaps even answerable for his dismissal.

The Emperor was expected just then at Odessa, and he came, but had his train stopped several miles off the town and ordered the Colonel of Police, Knop, to meet him there. In the meantime Levachoff and all the authorities were waiting at the station to receive the Emperor. When his train drew up, the Emperor got out and passed before Levachoff without saluting him and without taking the slightest notice of him. The whole suite of the Emperor, amongst whom there were intimate friends of Levachoff, followed his example, and the poor head of the town stood alone, without the slightest idea of what was happening or what had gone wrong.

This injustice on the part of Alexander II was so great that it seems difficult to find an analogous case in all his reign. But the inhabitants of the town of Odessa, who had seen the wonderful work Levachoff had done and enjoyed his gracious hospitality, tried to express their gratitude to him by making an ovation on the day of his

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departure. An enormous crowd, drawn from every social class, with that venerable old gentleman Count Strogonoff at the head, went to the station. Being away at this moment, I was exceedingly sorry not to be able to take part in the demonstration, but the people who witnessed it assured me that it was intensely touching; and nobody could doubt the sincerity of their motives, because the assembly was saying farewell to a person in disgrace, and therefore there could be no ulterior reason. It was a great protest against the injustice of the Emperor and his counsellors. All the eminent men of the town and their wives pressed round the Count and Countess to shake hands with them for the last time, wish them good luck, and escort them to their carriage, which was an extraordinary sight. It had been covered with flowers from the roof to the wheels, the outer part with garlands and the interior absolutely full of rare flowers, so that the whole carriage appeared as if it were made of flowers. When the train started, the cheering began and did not cease for a long time.

The Count and Countess settled for the winter in Petersburg in their beautiful house on the Fontanka, and in summer on their estate of Ossinovaja Rostcha, twenty kilometres from Petersburg, where until 1901 I went nearly every year for a few weeks. The Count began to cultivate the waste lands on his estate on the Finnish system, and the Countess spent her time arranging her library and growing roses, of which she had an immense variety. They were rare examples of Russians—always working; I owe them many happy days, and cannot be sufficiently grateful to their memory for all their goodness towards me. Their daughter, who married Prince Viasemsky, now lives at Paris in great poverty with her son and daughter-in-law, the beautiful Princess Vorontzoff, and their two children. It is a merciful thing that Countess Levachoff did not live to see this.

Although I managed to escape infection from the three kinds of typhus which were raging in our hospitals, in

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spite of constantly seeing the patients, I was very worn out and wanted rest and quiet, so I asked the Minister of Instruction for several months' leave. I then went with my family to Dresden, where my wife's parents were living, and I settled there. I met some English people who, on seeing my drawings, were surprised that I had never sent any to England, assuring me that they would soon fetch a good price.

That gave me the idea of going to Sitchovo to see whether I could not augment the income received from there, and thus be able to leave Odessa altogether. I stayed at Sitchovo for several weeks, admiring the energy of my agent, Karamycheff, but persuaded all the same that it was too risky to give up Odessa, with no other resources than those of uncertain harvests.

Back at Dresden, I received letters from several professors, telling me that the state of things was getting more and more unpleasant at Odessa; that revolutionary movements were becoming more frequent in all the Universities, and that at Odessa a General Paniutine had arrived with unlimited power; that he arrested people without mercy, imprisoned them, and sent them without any trial to Siberia.

My wife begged me to leave Odessa at all hazards. The sinister faces of certain students that she had seen in the streets frightened her, and she was persuaded that, under the conditions the professors described, I should never be able to work seriously. While I was waiting I tried to find out whether the assurances of the English people about my drawings could be taken seriously, or whether it was mere shallow flattery. So I decided to go to Munich and ask Lenbach, whom I considered the best German painter at that time. One day I met him near the Pinacothek and I bowed to him. He stopped. I mentioned several people he knew, saying that they were friends of mine. He bowed; and then without any further words I asked him if he would give me three lessons at a hundred thalers a time.

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"I should not know how to do it," he said, laughing. "To give advice, to instruct, to explain, is not my strong point. I really never know myself when a thing is going to succeed. Perhaps you would learn more in watching me paint than in listening to what I might say. Come to me to-morrow about four o'clock, when I shall be working at a portrait. You can watch me, and that will cost you nothing."

I thanked him very much for such immense generosity, saying that I thought it would be presumptuous of me to do so.

"Do as you like," he said, and we parted.

Then the idea came to me of going to the Academy of the Fine Arts, where Professor Gabl had been recommended to me. I asked him to come to the hotel and look at some of my water-colours.

"Come to my atelier," he said. "There is plenty of room, and you can use the models without being at all in my way."

The next day I went to his house; bought the tools he recommended, and worked five or six weeks in his studio. Sometimes other painters would be there. They all talked about Art and gave each other advice—and I acquired the conviction that if these gentlemen could make money there was no earthly reason why I should not, and I said good-bye to them all.

This excellent Gabl would not accept any remuneration, which touched me immensely.

I returned to Dresden, and in order not to incur the expense of a model, I painted my own portrait.

After deep reflection, I decided to send in my resignation to the Minister of Education. It was accepted, but I had to go back to Odessa to deliver my winter lectures, in order to give the University time to find a substitute. I left my family at Dresden.

Arrived at Odessa, I found that Volodkovitch and several of my friends had spent the whole night discussing whether it was not wiser to send me a telegram not to

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come back at such abnormal times, especially as someone had spread a rumour that I was chief of a Nihilist party. As I had no fear of being accused of any political treason, I was glad I had gone back—but what scientific work could one do in such an insecure atmosphere? I can remember nothing of those miserable months; I cannot even remember where I lived or where I fed. But in the spring, having said good-bye to the Volodkovitchs and the professors, I went back to Dresden, cutting off all association with Odessa.

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CHAPTER XII

In 1880 I went to Venice with my wife and children to visit my wife's aunt, Mrs. O'Connell, who was nursing my brother-in-law, laid up with typhus. He was getting better and they were taking him to Varese, near Milan, so we went with them to that beautiful place, where there is an excellent hotel for invalids. I took advantage of this and began to work seriously at my painting. Near Varese is a village, and a convent on the top of a mountain called the Madonna del Monte.

I went there with my paints, found a very decent little hotel, and determined to start on any subject I could find. Soon I discovered an old woman of ninety, and I painted her, sitting by her blackened stove, rustic and quaint. The water-colour was large, and as I had not had much chance of working from nature, I was very slow over it. I worked all day in the old woman's house, and in the evening I used to go and rest on a little grass-plot where there was a magnificent view over the Lombard Plain.

The women of the village, who worked all day making strings of church beads, used to come and sit by me on the grass and continue their work. There were old and young, beautiful and ugly, but all of them were full of bonhomie, gaiety, and repartee. One could talk about everything with these women, because everything interested them, but they all had the same ideal—that of becoming ladies. They had no kind of sentiment of envy with regard to "ladies," but they simply wanted to be ladies themselves. The envy which is raging to-day amongst the populace, ruining their very existence and demoralising them, was then unknown. These women

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did not even think of imitating ladies in their dress; to-day dress is the only thing thought about. They were gifted with a curiously sweet nature. Never during the three weeks that I lived with them did I hear quarrelling or unpleasant words. They worked gaily, joking and talking about love, and bursting out laughing when I asked the old women if they remembered the last day when they felt the passion. There was nobody but women in the village. The men earned their bread by working in other places, and at the hotel they told me to be careful, because sometimes the men were very jealous and might come back at any instant. There were two or three of these women whom I called by their names and they were real friends, and when they heard that my wife was coming on horseback to pay me a visit, they went right to the bottom of the mountain to take her flowers.

Back in Venice, we settled in furnished lodgings and I began to work. I wanted above all to decide in my own mind whether painting could ensure me a sufficient income to help me if the revenues from my estate at Sitchovo failed. I did not in the least, because I was becoming a painter, want to give up scientific interests and my intercourse with scientific men, especially as the artists I knew did not seem to me very sympathetic people. They were jealous, full of prejudices, and without any objectivity, and these faults are characteristic of them. The only people who are worse are musicians, but here it is more pardonable, because the art of the latter consists in trying to reproduce their soul, while the first-named have only to produce just *something*.

So that they should not think me an amateur painter and forget that I was a man of science, I had decided to take a pseudonym for my painting, especially as there was already an artist called Wolkoff. This was enough to make me change my name, because it is evident that one of two painters bearing the same name must do harm to the other. The public has not time to look up baptismal names, nor has it the memory to remember two

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different initials. An artist, an Austrian called Pettenkofen, told me that his brother or cousin—I cannot remember which—had done him immense harm with his painting and had very much hindered him in establishing a name for himself. It went so far that he found himself bound to give his relation a pension of 1,500 florins a year to induce him to paint under another name.

As I did not know anyone in Paris, and wanted to send some of my pictures to the Salon there, I dispatched four of my water-colours to Goupil, asking him to come to my aid.

On the 6th of January 1880 Goupil wrote to me:

"We are pleased to tell you that we have received your four water-colours, and though we are afraid they will be difficult to sell because the subjects are not very attractive, we consider their artistic qualities so good that we shall be happy if you will leave them with us on commission. We shall be very pleased to enter into relations with an artist of your talent, and we therefore offer you our services to get two of your water-colours into the Salon."

A friend having recommended me to write to the Fine Arts Society in London, I sent them some water-colours, fixing the price I wanted for them. In reply I received delightful compliments, but my prices were too high, so that I wrote asking for them to be sent back to me, which was done after about six weeks, during which time I had been working all day and learning a lot, so that when they at last arrived, I was very much struck by their faults. To tell the truth, however, it was the only time the Fine Arts Society sent me back any of my pictures during the twenty years that I had to do with them.

These two tests decided me to look out for a better unfurnished apartment and establish our own home. At that time, unlike the present, houses could be bought for very little and apartments were quite ridiculously cheap. I found an apartment in one of the most beautiful palaces in Venice, the Contarini, on the Grand Canal. In reality

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it was two palaces standing next to each other with a connecting entresol. In one of these palaces I took the first floor and the palaces' entresol. The first floor had a very big dining-room, two big drawing-rooms and other large rooms. The entresol was composed of a number of rooms, side by side, all looking on to the Canal. I describe these rooms to show what could be obtained in those days for a ridiculous sum. If I had not kept the contract I signed in 1880, for two years, in which the rent is stated to be 1,000 francs a year, I should have forgotten the figure and could not have believed it was possible.

Of course we had to furnish it with the necessaries of life, but as old furniture was not dear then, we very soon had a charming apartment.

The Contarini Palaces belonged at that time to the Countess Berchtold, a woman who had been a great beauty and who, now she was old, would not let anyone see her. The most extraordinary stories were afloat about the life that she lived in these palaces, and they even said that a Frenchman had been shut up there once for more than two weeks. I think, however, that this was an invention of the populace, who could not understand a woman a little different from other people. What is certainly true, though, is that she lived quite alone in a house next to one of the palaces; a man took her food there every day, and except for this man she never saw anyone. Every now and then she went out at night, and the people who met her in the streets thought she was a witch. In spite of this, she had a son, Count Berchtold, who came from time to time to Venice to see his mother and lived in an apartment which was retained for him. Everybody knew her niece, the wife of Duca della Grazia, son of the Duchesse de Berry. This couple lived in the splendid palace Vendramin, and the Duchess, who is now over eighty, is still quite strong and walks about alone in the streets. In the winter she leaves her palace to stay in an hotel.

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Soon after we had settled in the Contarini Palace, I had to complain of some defects, for which I considered the proprietor responsible, and I gave a letter to old Simonetti, the only person the Countess ever saw, to hand to her.

This is her reply :

" Mr. Wolkoff,

" I have just received your letter, which astonished me very much. To begin with, I am very sorry to have to refuse everything you ask, and if you will take the trouble to inquire, you will find that I never do any repairs. I always look after my own affairs, and if I let apartments cheaply in the Contarini Palaces, it is because I do not want to be bothered with unreasonable requirements, such as people who take apartments always make."

In spite of the curtness of the foregoing, the letter finished up as follows :

" We are so near the great Feasts that I send you all the compliments of the season and wish you a happy New Year."

After that I never complained again.

The next thing to think of was the education of my children, and I went about looking at the different schools that were in Venice. At this time German and French were very much neglected there, but apart from these languages, what classes could children enter who could not speak a word of Italian ? I hoped to find something like the wonderful school at Florence which I had attended for a year in 1857 and which was called the School for Fathers of Families. Children, as I said before, were put into special classes there to continue the studies they had begun in their own country ; but nothing similar could be found at Venice. I therefore had to engage the services of a Herr Bühring, a young German whose face was cut about as the result of duels, and who had just finished his University course. We settled him with the children in the entresol of the palace, and he began to give them lessons

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and to study Italian for himself. The energy with which he went to work was astonishing. Directly he had finished the children's lessons he would get out his own books—his translations and dictionary—so that after scarcely a year he was able to print a pamphlet in Italian.

When he felt the heat he would jump out of the window into the canal, early in the morning, and come in again in his bathing-dress by the big front door. One day he went up to the first floor and jumped from the balcony into the water, a thing I begged him not to do again, because of the remains of mooring-posts (*pali*) which might have been left below the water.

This entirely Venetian amusement has completely disappeared since the introduction of the steam-boats. In the old days everyone could bathe before his own house, and the old Countess Thun, who had a little palace on the Canal, erected a tent between the four posts in front of her house, so as to be able to enjoy privacy. It was at the entrance of our palace, looking on the Canal, that I gave my two sons swimming lessons, and they picked it up so quickly that after two weeks' instruction they could swim to the railway-station, a distance of about two kilometres, accompanied by my wife in her gondola. I need not say that everything to do with gondolas, gondoliers, and boats was of immense interest to the children, and they were not happy until they were given a little boat called a sandolo, in which they could row in the Venetian way, standing up. Soon the two boys and their sister could row very well. Their sandolo was very well known in the town because they all wore blue jerseys and caps and my little girl had a grey skirt.

One day Prince Victor Bariatinsky was with us, and I asked him whether he would like to go out with the children in the boat. As an old sailor he said he would like it very much, but being very gouty he told the children that if he fell into the water it would be fatal. This did not frighten them, and they took him a long way and brought him back without any mishap.

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I gave this little boat the name of "Mi no, eh!" which in Venetian means, "It is not me," because I knew that in the little canals the children would be constantly having trouble with other boats and there would be arguments as to who was at fault: everybody would say, "It is not me" ("Mi no, eh!")

Although the palace was enormous, I could not manage to get a laboratory, chiefly because we had to think of warming the place before everything else, and it was in winter that I wanted to work at science. A small hot-house and a big heated room at the side would have been indispensable for my scientific experiments, but such conveniences were only obtainable in one's own house. It was because of this that the idea of buying a house came into my head, and when, at the end of the year 1882, a favourable sale of my water-colours gave me a little money, I bought the house where we had stayed on our return from Varese. When I told Countess Berchtold that we would leave her apartment in 1888, this is what she wrote:

"MR. WOLKOFF,

"Simonetti wants me to write you a love-letter. So here is one to say that I love you very much indeed—which is not quite true, but nearly so, because I adore your children, and am very sorry on this account that you are leaving us. They will be so far off that I shall not see them passing in their little boat, which was one of my greatest amusements. I want also to tell you that if I have always refused the pleasure of meeting you, the reason is that I cannot make an exception, although I tell you frankly I should like to have done so, firstly because I like Russians, and secondly, as you are a little 'mad,' this would have appealed to me, as I am so myself. I hope you will be happy in your new house, which I know a little. Do not launch out into great expense, and remember that in Venice one always has to pay double the builders' estimate.

"With my very warm salutations

"Believe me, yours sincerely,

"MATILDE BERCHTOLD STRAKEN."

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There was one curious thing I must mention about the Contarini Palace which made it celebrated. People said that it was full of secret passages and that the Countess could walk all over it without being seen or heard, she herself being able to do both. We were persuaded that there was some truth in this, for one day having pushed too hard against a brick in the wall, the brick fell through and we saw there was another room or corridor behind. I think therefore that this poor Countess, who lived in one wing of the Palace far off, saw my children oftener in the house than in their sandolo, and hence her regret that the children were leaving.

I was very proud the day I bought my house for 15,000 francs, a very low sum for a house on the Grand Canal. But what was my disappointment on meeting a Venetian whom I told about this purchase, when he informed me that I had only bought *half* the house, which belonged to two different proprietors, and, alas! I found it was true. I did not understand that in Venice houses can be divided into floors, so I was obliged to buy the other floors by paying 18,000 francs more. This unlooked-for expense made it necessary for me to go on working, without any hope of getting a laboratory. When I came to look at my acquisition closely, I saw that to make it habitable I must spend more than 100,000 francs.

Not having as yet a name as an artist, I could only hope to make this sum by fixing the price of my water-colours very low, and at the same time by augmenting their number as much as possible. Very soon I saw that the necessary 100,000 francs, not to mention the cost of the little laboratory, would need three years' work at ten or twelve hours a day. This discovery upset me, and I had to convince myself that the idea of pursuing two activities simultaneously, viz. science and art, was not feasible. The necessity of saying good-bye to science, in which I had already made a name, and of putting an end to the intercourse with several savants, who would probably consider me a deserter, went to my heart. My grief

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at that time is indescribable. If I could have foreseen that twenty years later I should inherit a magnificent estate with the chance of putting my scientific knowledge into practice, I should have left Venice, and have been content to put up with what Sitchovo could give me in the way of income, and have returned to work at a German University.

All day long I used to paint in the gondolas or little streets, and in the evening I rested by going into society. The work in the little Venetian streets—which soon will be only a memory—was interesting in the highest degree, and that not only because of the picturesque architecture, but because of the women who were generally to be found sitting at the doors of their houses, and the children who played there all day long, crying and gesticulating. I shall never forget the reply made by a little girl of six who was playing at the end of the street, when her mother, who was standing beside me, cried out to her: "Vien qua, presto, curri in sto momento!" ("Come here quickly —this very moment.")

"Neanche in un momentin di sto momento non vegno," replied the child, shrieking with laughter. ("I won't even come in a little tiny moment of that moment!")

One day some women brought me a boy of about ten.

"Look, Mr. Painter," they said. "Here is a genius who can paint everything he sees. Please help him with his work, sir. You will be doing a good action, because neither he nor his parents have anything to eat."

To please these ladies I gave up my sketch-book and my pencil to the embryo genius and told him to go to the end of the street to draw a boat which happened to be at anchor about a hundred yards away, only showing the poop and some masts so closely in line that one had to look attentively to distinguish the number.

The boy sat down to work, and I saw him from my place looking hard at the boat, and then, bending over his sketch-book, drawing feverishly, sometimes rubbing out with the india-rubber I had lent him.

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Scarcely an hour had passed before the women, who had left me to follow the exploits of their protégé with interest, brought him back in triumph.

"Look, Mr. Painter—look at the boat, is it not like—like?"

In fact it was a boat and the outlines were drawn by quite an expert hand, but the boat was in profile.

"Did you really see the boat like that?" I asked the child, who was standing in front of me, quite proud of himself.

"Yes," he replied readily.

"And the distance between the three masts—did you really see them stand apart like that?"

"I know that they are far apart," said the child, with a satisfied air, "because the boat is large."

Without saying a word, I took the boy by the arm to the end of the street and began to draw in front of him, while trying to direct his attention to the different lines which the boat showed, explaining the method of fixing the length of these lines, comparing them with each other and the principal angles to be observed. The child was red and confused, and repeated at each new remark, which seemed to produce on him the effect of a revelation, "Yes, it is true, it is true, it is true!"

All this showed that the capacity for progress acquired by a child at the time he begins to realise locomotion and movement increases very little in the following years. The child goes through them without feeling the necessity of comparing or completing the formulas that he has arranged for himself, and which he likes to scribble over his notebook to illustrate the little stories that he invents.

Of all the laws that nature imposes on man from his first infancy, the most arduous to carry into practice is that of locomotion. The part played in the solution of this problem by the organ of sight is self-evident. Without the assistance of this factor no child can learn either to measure distances or to compare them, an essential condition to avoid collisions and catastrophes of every sort.

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Therefore it is at the expense of his body that the child learns to walk, to choose the shortest way to reach his goal, and to jump ditches or leap from a height without breaking his neck. On the success of the rapidity with which he is able to observe and measure the distance between himself and his comrades depends his success in most of his games. The attitude of children in this respect is often so remarkable that one would be tempted to believe that they are capable of making these deductions directly they can appreciate the outlines of objects and the relative length of lines and their direction. But it is not so. All the things children draw between the ages of five and seven prove to us that they do not draw what they see, but only what they know ought to exist, and this they do by reducing the multitude of visual impressions which they perceive in nature into an equal number of graphic formulas.

Place a child of five years of age a few yards from an ordinary table and tell him to draw the table for you. Without the slightest hesitation he will draw a horizontal line supported by four vertical lines, all of the same length. Now, what is certain is that at no time in his life has he ever seen what he has drawn; the legs of the table could never have appeared to him except as being of different lengths—but he *knows* they are of the same length and that is enough.

When a child draws a carriage, he contents himself by drawing one back wheel larger and one front wheel smaller, but never in reality has he seen such a carriage. If he draws a house, it is always a square or rectangular figure. Now, this kind of outline can only be seen at an enormous distance; the one at which a child is generally placed distorts objects completely, because of the effect caused by perspective, which a child cannot grasp.

Of all the impressions that a child forms during his growth, the strongest, and the ones which contribute most to the development of the analytical side of his mind, are those born of his visual impressions.

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Unfortunately he soon stops looking at things and comparing them and contents himself with *knowing*. Any method of teaching would be good if it obliged the child to reproduce exact imitations of things, while avoiding exaggeration, for this latter eliminates the possibility of comparison.

I had an opportunity of raising this question ten years ago, in my book entitled *L'à peu près dans la critique*. To answer it is of the same importance to-day as then, for the number of pedagogues who substitute exaggeration for artistic exploration is great, without the seekers having arrived at any good results. Of course there is no rule without an exception, and one meets children who take such an immense pleasure in imitating every kind of object that at last they reproduce them with fair accuracy, but we are speaking here of the great majority.

The first really large water-colour I painted was done in the Church of the Frari. I called it "After Mass," and it occupied me for three of the winter months. They shut me up in the church from twelve to five o'clock, and the four Guardians sat at the entrance to open the doors for visitors, whom they waited for with the greatest impatience because of the tips they received. Sometimes they squabbled amongst themselves and sometimes they talked in the most friendly way. These Guardians were curious men, from the psychological point of view. They were probably honest men, as the authorities confided to them objects of great value, such as the Catholic Church usually possesses—monuments and pictures, quantities of red damask, candlesticks and poor-boxes, all were in their charge. Very often in winter, when nobody came to visit the church all day long, they remained for hours sitting together looking depressed and half asleep. One day I saw them watching with the greatest interest how a wax match which they had found on the ground was burning in the hands of one of them, and they were as pleased as children when their companion burnt his fingers.

A painter happened to be copying the monument of

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Canova at the Frari, and had brought some young women as models to put them in the foreground. These models were very gay people, and one day I saw them making experiments in the middle of the church to see how many times each one of them could turn on her heel. The evolutions interested the Guardians so much that three of them, although old men, began to imitate the pirouetting on their heels. This went on for about twenty minutes, to the joy of the whole party. Looking at them, one would have said they were idiots, or only half men. That is what is so astonishing in all the churches where I have had occasion to work; the Guardians appeared to be of the same idiotic type, in spite of which the ecclesiastical authorities seem to be able to depend on their honesty. After years of experience with these people in different churches, I understand their character, and I often ask myself whether the idiotic side of their nature was inherited at birth, or whether it came from perpetually living in abnormal conditions. They all suffered from rheumatism because it is quite enough to spend merely a few winter days in a church in Venice to get this complaint, and they spent their whole life there.

Now that our existence at Venice was more or less settled, the desire of seeing Russia and my place at Sitchovo, which I had not seen for two years, became such a great temptation that I could not resist it, and I determined to start directly the great heat became intolerable.

I went straight to Sitchovo and stayed there two weeks, more and more pleased with my Karamycheff. Coming back via Petersburg, I saw a few of my friends and put up with Bageofwod. The Grand Duchess Catherine,[1] having heard that I was in town, told me to come to lunch and stay a few days at Oranienbaum, the most beautiful little palace in all Russia, where she was living. It had a wonderful Tiepolo on the ceiling of the dining-room and splendid Louis XV furniture which had belonged to the Empress Catherine II. I was put into a separate

[1] Daughter of the Grand Duchess Helen, who died in 1873.

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building which was reserved for guests, ministers, and friends. Having an hour before me, I quietly unpacked my portmanteau, but when I got to the bottom an awful terror seized me. I turned over the garments again and again, but I could find no black trousers, for that brute of a valet of Bageofwod's had forgotten to pack my dress-suit! The frightful part of it was that in those days every presentation at Court, no matter at what hour of the day, could only be made in evening dress. To come from foreign parts and not to do according to the ways of the country would have shown not only a want of good breeding but great carelessness. My first thought was to throw everything back into the portmanteau and to bolt for Petersburg, but what would the Grand Duchess say? I rang. A servant came, and I explained the situation. "Help me," I said. "That ass at Petersburg has forgotten to pack my trousers. You must somehow find me a pair."

The servant understood the position and brought me a heap of trousers. I tried them on, one pair after the other. Without speaking of the cloth of which these trousers, the property of the Court servants, was made, none of them would fit. One pair was too long, another too short, another too wide, and all had stains of grease or wax. It was a real comedy, but an agonising one. At this moment the servant came to say that the Grand Duchess begged Monsieur Wolkoff to go and see her. I decided to go as I was, in morning dress, with the courage of a condemned man.

I walked across the garden to the palace, feeling that astonished eyes were staring at my grey legs. The Grand Duchess Catherine received me with her good kind smile. As I bowed and she gave me her hand, I said, "I have come to say good-bye to your Highness."

"How, good-bye! But you have only just arrived. What do you mean?"

"Alas, Madam, through the imbecility of a servant who has forgotten to pack a necessary article of dress, I cannot comply with the law of etiquette which makes

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that article obligatory, so I cannot come before your Highness."

"But, Monsieur Wolkoff, what does that matter? Please do not think of it. I want to see you, and not your clothes. I assure you that it does not in the least matter."

"I am afraid, Madam, that the people who will be at luncheon will interpret this incident as a want of respect in my attitude towards the ways of the Court."

"But indeed not, sir. I will tell my son to explain everything, and you will have nothing to be afraid of."

But what I had thought would happen, did. Old Vanlarlarsky, whose daughter married the son of the Grand Duchess later on, never stopped making pointed remarks on the odd fashions which Russians living abroad were trying to introduce into the country.

After having spent several days with this kind Grand Duchess and having talked a great deal about Wagner with her young and intelligent daughter Princess Hélène and her son Prince George, I went back to Venice, and found that whilst I was away my wife had made friends with several people there.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE foreign society which passed its winter at Venice was divided at that time into three groups. The German had for its centre Princess Hatzfeldt, who lived in the Malipiero Palace; the Austrian circle had Princess Mélanie Metternich, at the Bembo Palace; and the cosmopolitan set, Princess Dolgorouky, in her palace on the Zattere. The Hatzfeldt group, the most serious of the three, had scarcely any relations with the Austrians or with the cosmopolitan set. Besides Germans of distinction who were passing through Venice, one met artists and musicians there, and Liszt was often the guest of Princess Hatzfeldt. The Austrians were more amusing and careless, saw each other oftener, played cards a great deal, and some of them were very lively indeed, especially when Don Juans of the type of old Prince Esterhazy came to Venice.

There were other houses where a great deal of entertainment went on in the most charming and hospitable way. There was, for instance, the house of Madame de Pilat, the wife of the Austrian Consul-General, and that of Mrs. Bronson, an American settled at Venice with her only daughter, who later on married Count Rucellai of Florence. The only Italians who went into this foreign society were Countess Marcello, the great friend of Princess Dolgorouky, the two Mocenigo Princesses, of whom one was a Greek, and the other born a Windischgrätz, and the two sisters-in-law of the latter.

Amongst the most popular people were the Duke and Duchess della Grazia, who lived in the Vendramin, in a wing of which Wagner lived and died; also the Princess of Montenegro, who, after having given up her rights to the throne to her brother-in-law, Nicholas, had settled

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at Venice with her sister and daughter; Mr. and Mrs. Eden, Lady Layard, Countess Drechsel with her husband and two children, and Prince Léon Gagarine, a Russian who had lived at Venice a long time and spent his days abusing the Italians, and was devoted to the Countess Albrizzi, an Austrian, to whom he left a part of his fortune, were others I met often.

The difference between the society of forty-five years ago and that of to-day is that Jewish families were not received then, and simply took no part in it. To-day the foreign society at Venice has completely disappeared and in Italian society the Jew is dominant. Even the College of Music, which is called after the celebrated Marcello, owes its existence to Jews, for its Director and Professors are all of that race. However, one must admit that in no country in the world have Jews so completely merged themselves in the interests of the nation in which they live as in Italy, and what has probably contributed to establish this good understanding is that Italy, being a southern nation, differs physically very much less from the Jewish than do the northern nations.

It was in the circle of Princess Hatzfeldt that my relations were the most cordial. She was a woman of sixty-five, of great intelligence and interested in everything, although very deaf, but I think that her deafness helped our friendship, because at thirty-seven I had splendid lungs and was never tired of speaking rather loudly to her. There were always two or three relations with her, besides her daughter, Baroness Schleinitz, who often came to see her; but the principal ornament of her drawing-room was a young woman whom the Princess loved as if she were her own daughter. She was the daughter of the celebrated Austrian General, Baron Gablentz, and she had married an Italian, Mr. Acton, brother of the famous Donna Laura Minghetti of Rome, and one of those Actons who, as sailors, had distinguished themselves in the tragic battle of Lissa. This Mr. Acton soon afterwards died and left scarcely anything for his wife, but with the help

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her mother gave her she had just enough to live upon and resided in Venice in a small apartment which she arranged in perfect taste. I saw her very often. She was a remarkable woman from the point of view of beauty, with an extraordinary intelligence and very witty. Her charming regular features, her exquisite complexion, delicate as a child's, made all the more impression because her beautiful eyes were full of life and determination. Her character was the result of a combination of two very different natures, of which one was marked by a tendency towards objectiveness, whereas the other was apt to be subjective and exaggerated. This versatility of nature was her greatest charm for people who did not go very deep, and was also sympathetic to those who sought to go further into reality, and who admired the way with which, when criticising her own faults, she formed opinions based on accurate data. The rapidity with which the emotions of her brain interchanged ideas often played her a bad turn by making her appear false, whereas no one was more sincere than she. Many people could never understand her, especially her own mother. She hated everything that was false, especially false sentimentality.

One evening, her husband, being very ill, came to the door in a dressing-gown, holding a candlestick in each hand, and said,

"Matilde, I am dying."

She replied, "My dear, dying people do not walk about like that"; and she took him back to his room without being the least sorry for the sick man.

She knew that "I am dying" was intentionally exaggerated, and that made her cold.

Severe towards herself, she was also hard on others, especially those whom she disliked. She knew all the tricks of the gondoliers, for instance, and the first idea that came to her when there was an epidemic at Venice was the advantage of this infection in diminishing the number of gondoliers.

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When she discussed any subject with men whose ideas were unintelligent or confused, she answered them with such indisputable logic that they preferred to change the conversation.

One evening at Princess Hatzfeldt's, when Count Gobineau—whose works Wagner admired immensely—was there, this writer came in conflict with Madame Acton by his opinions on the question of second sight. He told a story about an occasion when he was walking along the Boulevards in Paris, and suddenly had the impression that a tower which he had seen somewhere either in India or China was collapsing. A few hours later the first thing he saw in a newspaper at a café was the publication of this fact.

"But then," said Madame Acton, "the second sight applied to the news printed in a newspaper and not to the fall of the tower, which was already in ruins when you had the impression, and when the newspaper was apprised of the fact."

This remark did not very much please the great writer.

A distinguished Austrian, director of some scientific college, who all his life had occupied himself with archæology, explained one day to Princess Hatzfeldt why there was such a decadence in art and why art was exhausting itself. He said that it was because having said everything, it could either only repeat itself or go downhill. "Look at the sculpture of the Greeks, or the pictures in Holland or Italy. What can you imagine more beautiful?" he said. "Look at the Apollo, or even one of the Madonnas of Bellini."

"But—two Apollos," replied Madame Acton, "that would be a progress in art; and if a lot of people painted like Bellini, that also would be a step forward." Her opinions about everything were equally clear and precise.

"Don't forget," she wrote from Paris, "to go and see at the Luxembourg the pictures of a Russian, Mademoiselle Baskirtcheff, a pupil of Bastien Lepage. She died at the age of twenty-four and was very much talked about;

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she was a kind of precocious genius. After her death her journal was published and gave me the impression that she was a very ambitious and gifted girl, but not anything like a *real* genius." Nothing could be juster than this criticism.

One day when a lot of people were together at Princess Hatzfeldt's and because there were some famous painters there, such as Passini, Zezzos, Ruben, and Puteani, we were talking about the capacity that a painter should possess, and how rare that capacity was. I remarked that any individual who had an accurate eye could soon draw well, and that, equally, anyone with a visual memory for colour could soon paint well.

"And the hand," remarked Passini, "does it not play a great part?"

"No," I said; "it does not play any part except to determine the kind of painting the artist will choose, and very often too 'clever' a hand draws a painter into a finicking style, which it is difficult to get out of afterwards."

"Well," said Passini, "I feel confident that with hands like Madame Acton's, for instance, one would never be able to paint."

We all laughed, because everyone knew her pretty hands and that they were so maladroit that they were incapable of doing any needlework.

"Ladies," I said, "I do not at all share the opinions of Mr. Passini, and I ask you to come to me for two hours a day, and we will try experiments."

Four ladies, amongst whom was Madame Acton, accepted my invitation, and next day they came to me. To see what their visual capacity was like I asked them to divide a line of a dozen centimetres long into two equal parts, by a stroke.

Two amongst them did it fairly well, but the other two showed such absence of accuracy of eye that I had to send them away. Madame Acton was one of the two whose eye was accurate.

Next day I asked them to draw 100 lines as straight as

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possible and to divide them into two equal parts. It is true that the lines Madame Acton drew were not very straight, but the general result showed that she had a really accurate vision.

For the second lesson I told them to measure lines of 10 centimetres and then divide them into three equal parts. All their home-work consisted of this kind of problem, but every day they had to lengthen the lines that were to be divided.

The third and fourth lessons consisted in copying angles, and I tried to make them understand that in painting from nature buildings and interiors, the accuracy of angles serves as a substitute for knowledge of perspective.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh lessons were also occupied with these angles, also with curves and circles and their transformation into ellipses.

In the eighth lesson I explained what shadows were, and that their colour varied according to the shade of the place they were "lit" from, and I showed them the different colours used in water-colours, and also the different combinations one could make from them.

At the ninth lesson I asked them to come with me to paint in a church. Here the difference in the capacity of my two pupils was very clearly marked. Madame Acton saw colour; the other lady did not see it, or saw it badly. We painted for a week, sometimes in churches and sometimes in gondolas. The pictures of Madame Acton no doubt showed a clumsy hand, but also were remarkable for more important qualities than mere technical ability. They had the kind of sincerity which a painter who is only thinking of the showy effect of his work would avoid, but Madame Acton never thought of anything but the truth of the tone she was trying to reproduce. Her tones were so accurate that they made one forget her drawing, which was rather zig-zaggy. Her interiors were remarkable, and I made her take her last work to Passini.

The latter would not believe his eyes. After having carefully looked at the different qualities and different

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faults of her pictures, he put his thoughts into words and said, "You have nothing to learn from us"—and this "us" meant painters in general.

This opinion was perfectly true. The only thing she needed was practice and hard work. The other lady did not go so far, and no amount of work would have given her an eye for colour. One is born with it, or one is not. That is what many painters cannot understand; they work all their lives trying to acquire—or imagining that they have acquired it.

Madame Acton was a Free-thinker and considered Death an excellent way of getting out of a disagreeable situation. Her father had committed suicide, and, as she was accustomed to the idea, it had no terrors for her, and she looked upon it as the only weapon man possessed against nature. I found one day in her room a curious instrument, a sort of frame of wire, which, covered with a piece of some kind of material, resembled the mask which surgeons employ when administering chloroform.

"What is that for?" I asked.

She laughed for some time and would not answer me, and then she told me that one day she had an impulse to kill herself, and to do it in the pleasantest way she had contrived this apparatus. Having covered it with a piece of flannel, she fixed it to her bed, above her head; then she put a little bottle of chloroform so that its contents could fall, drop by drop, on the mask. She then put a strap round the bed, which she had fixed to a buckle on her arm so that she could not by moving in her sleep alter the position of the mask and of the bottle—and she waited. Everything went very well and she was already beginning to get sleepy, when a drop of chloroform fell into her eye and hurt so dreadfully that she called her maid, and that was the end of her "suicide."

When she had told me all this she burst out laughing, and when without saying a word I destroyed the apparatus, she merely said smilingly, "Why do you do that? You will only make me spend money again some other day."

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At the Princess Hatzfeldt's I also made the acquaintance of a charming man, Prince Rudolf Liechtenstein, a cousin of the reigning Prince. He spent his winters at Venice with his wife, an actress of the Court theatre at Vienna—a very uninteresting person and a bad actress. She was his second wife, and as the first was still alive he could not be divorced in Austria, and he could only marry this one in a Uniate Church of Hungary.

Liechtenstein was a real charmer of women. He was intelligent, witty, good-natured, with piercing eyes and a white face; he wore an enormous cravat *à la* Lavallière. He blacked his own boots himself every day. But all this eccentricity was natural and he had not the least wish to try to astonish the world. He called his friends by their pet names. Baroness Schleinitz he called "Mimi," and he was very intimate with Cosima and the Wagner family.

One of his most characteristic points was his incapacity for keeping the slightest secret, which endeared him to women, who are always anxious to know stories about other people. Each one of them thought that he liked her the best and made an exception in the confidences which she made to him—but each was wrong!

An excellent musician himself, he was a great Wagnerian, and his improvisations were interesting. He used to sit at the piano improvising for hours at a time, and did it so well that even Wagner and Liszt heard him with pleasure.

I very soon made great friends with this interesting man, in spite of the antipathy which I had for his wife. He admitted to me one day that his only desire in life was to separate himself entirely from his relations, who had allowed him to keep the castle of Neulengbach near Vienna, but because of his marriage were able to take everything else from him. He wanted to get absolutely rid of them and earn his living by work. I advised him to try to write an opera, because with his name, even a bad opera might have had a success.

"I have not got a subject," he said.

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"What does that matter?" I said. "In every opera there are choruses, scenes of love and jealousy. Begin by composing a theme for a chorus."

"Dear, dear!" he said, "that is true. I shall start to-morrow and bring you the theme the moment it is done."

After two weeks of work he brought me his theme. It consisted of only one bar! and was not bad; but I realised how little a facility for improvising helps in doing serious work, and I saw that the writing of operas would never bring him in enough to live upon.

Then he wanted to try literature and wrote a description of the dance *Tchardas*.

I took the trouble to write a criticism on this work, and sent it to Princess Hatzfeldt, begging her to give it to him if she thought it would be of any use. All the colony of ladies who were at Venice, at Princess Hatzfeldt's, were fond of Liechtenstein, and interested in the success of his schemes, and many of them thought that my criticism would have done him a great deal of good, but the excellent Princess never gave it to him, but wrote a counter-criticism which I thought very remarkable. However, I think Liechtenstein of himself realised his literary incapacity, for he never wrote anything again.

One day Liechtenstein told me that a celebrated American spiritualist called Bastien was to arrive in Europe, and that he was coming to stay with him at Neulengbach and show him the wonders of spiritualism. "I am rather nervous," he said, "of that kind of experiment, because I know how easily I am taken in. I therefore pray you, my dear friend, when Bastien comes, to be present at the séances, so that you may explain them to me and moderate my too great credulity."

"I will come," I replied, "if you will arrange a hole in the wall of the next room to that in which Bastien is making his experiments, so that I can follow his actions and movements without his knowing that I am there." This, however, could not be arranged, and so I did not go.

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Bastien duly came, and Liechtenstein ended by becoming a wild spiritualist. I cannot remember whether it was in 1881 or 1882 that, on my way to Russia, I went round by Bayreuth to see Princess Hatzfeldt, Baroness Schleinitz, and Rudolf, who were together there. Directly Liechtenstein saw me he began to talk about spiritualism, and asked me to come in the evenings to the séances which they were having together and at which the painter Passini was also present. The procedure was to put a piece of paper and a pencil under the table, and the spirits wrote the most extraordinary things. After having given me several examples, he said suddenly, "I am taking advantage of our being alone, my dear friend, to tell you that I am in a great hole because of an adventure which has happened to my wife."

"What is it about?" I asked.

"Wagner to-day turned her out of his house, publicly. What ought I to do? What can I say or invent?"

Talking like this, he walked up and down the room in a state of great agitation.

"I should swallow the pill and say no more about it. You cannot challenge Wagner, can you?"

The same day I saw Princess Hatzfeldt, Baroness Schleinitz, and Passini, and I suggested that I should stay for the evening's séance so as to unmask Princess Liechtenstein, because I was convinced that it was she who wrote with her foot; but every one of them, although persuaded that this woman cheated, begged me not to do anything, because Rudolf would go mad about it. So I said good-bye to all of them and went to Russia, admiring very much the astuteness of Wagner, who had certainly realised the part that Liechtenstein's wife played in these spiritualistic séances. By this means she had found an easy way of getting a hold on her husband. Realising his impressionable nature and knowing that he had got rid of his first wife, she thought that he might finish up by making her submit to the same fate. But now Rudolf was hearkening to the spirits, and it was them whom he

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obeyed. One of the first orders that he received from them was never to speak about spiritualism to Wolkoff!

Two months afterwards, going back to Russia, I found that the Liechtensteins were at Merano, and I went out of my way to see Rudolf at their hotel. The Princess left the room directly she saw me come in, but Rudolf received me, as always, like a real friend. I asked him to come next day to my hotel at whatever hour he liked. He did not dare answer me for fear of being overheard, but he saw me out, and going down the staircase he said in a low voice, "I will come at nine o'clock."

He kept his word, and at nine o'clock we went into the garden to talk. We discussed all our friends, and he proved to me, by a long conversation with regard to Madame Acton, that his ideas were perfectly lucid, impartial, and even of great profundity. At the end I asked him if the spirits themselves talked to him, or whether they used someone else to transmit their absurdities.

"My dear friend," he then said, "you are probably of the number of those who suspect my wife. Do you really think that I should have been dupe enough or stupid enough not to notice if she was cheating? No, you do not realise all that is going to happen in the world. You cannot imagine the rôle I am to play in the future life of the nations. I shall sit on a mountain, and spiritualism will pass through my person into the great masses of the people."

Then I realised that Liechtenstein was a lost man. As I offered him my hand I said, "Good-bye, my dear friend; good luck to you on your mountain, and do not forget me in the plain."

He shook hands and left without any further word.

I do not remember how long the life of this much-changed man lasted, but I heard people say that he was becoming day by day weaker and always more certain of the great future reserved for him by the spirits. Two or three years after I saw a photograph of him by chance, for he no longer came to Venice. It was another man: his face

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had become very thin, his hair was going grey, and he was being pushed about in a bath-chair. He died some years later.

It goes without saying that the Wagner family were very much to the fore in the Hatzfeldts' house and often spent the evening there, so I had ample opportunities of talking to the Master frankly and cordially. Only once were we not agreed; this was à propos of Gambetta, whom I was praising, whereas Wagner called him a "Hanswurst" ("clown").

Young Thode, who became later on the husband of Daniela von Bülow, daughter of Cosima Wagner, and Professor of History and Art at the University of Heidelberg, also came to the Hatzfeldts'.

Liszt used to spend whole evenings at the Malipiero Palace, and invariably occupied the time by improvisations on the piano. It was very interesting to watch his face at such moments, but as to the improvisations they were generally only passages of very simple harmonies, played by him very lightly, scarcely touching the piano. Very remarkable was his tendency—directly his hands wandered to the higher clefs of the piano—to finish his phrases (which really came to nothing more than the playing of a half-asleep musician) by trills on the fourth and fifth fingers.

I must admit that his conversation was more interesting than his improvisations, and I understood the feeling of Madame Acton, who was always impressed by his look of extreme delicacy. She often said, "Look at him!—look at him! Listen to that wonderful man, because he will soon disappear"—and in fact he did soon disappear.

I shall never forget one evening of musical enjoyment which I had at the Wagners'. There were a lot of people there, amongst whom were Princess Hatzfeldt and Baroness Schleinitz. The conversation ran high, because wherever Baroness Schleinitz was it never flagged. We were discussing the causes of the difference between a man who

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cared about music and one who derived no pleasure from it. "To be just to the latter," I said, "who are often men of great intelligence, we must admit that music produces an illness in our brain, a pathological condition."

"And why not?" interrupted Madame Cosima. "Is not the pearl itself an illness?"

Wagner suddenly got up and, addressing everyone, said confidentially, "What shall we play?"

Everyone was silent, and waited in the hope of hearing some favourite piece of the Master played by Rubinstein and conducted by himself. The word "we" seemed to give reason for this hope, when, to our great astonishment and disappointment, we saw Wagner take from the shelves a little sonata of Mozart and put it on the desk of the piano. Rubinstein began to play, while Wagner walked up and down the room without making the slightest noise. I was sitting by Rubinstein. The sonata was one of the easiest and most simple ones; any musician had merely to cast an eye on each page and did not require to look again. It was the Master whom Rubinstein's eyes followed. He was walking up and down without ever looking at the music, but by imperceptible movements, sometimes with his hand and sometimes with one finger, he was conducting and producing the most astonishing effects. It was marvellous, and how much it taught one! We were all ears, and as for me I was still more all eyes, for in spite of my admiration for the way in which he played this piece of music, I saw that Rubinstein was not playing it as it was written, and that the effects Wagner was making him produce did not correspond at all to those I read in the notes.

Later on I took the liberty of pointing this out to the Master. "Do you really think that Mozart wrote the signs as they are printed?" he said. "In every edition people have taken the liberty of modifying them according to their own taste, and Mozart himself has disappeared."

People said that Wagner had a difficult temper, and

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even those whom he could not do without were not immune from his disagreeable and sometimes even monstrous words. It was rumoured that Josef Rubinstein [1] —the sweetest and most modest man that nature has ever produced, and without whom Bayreuth itself would probably not have existed as it is at present—who always accompanied the rehearsals on the piano, not being able to endure the Master's caprices any longer, left him one day, presumably for good; but at the end of three years he came back and declared that he could live no longer without him. The chief of the ballet at Dessau, Fricke, whose acquaintance I had made at Bayreuth, a man who was quite indispensable as producer, confessed to me that he really could not go on with it; so unpleasant were his relations with Wagner that every evening he wrote down all he had gone through during the day. He was getting ready a book, he said, which was to be published after Wagner's death; but when I saw Fricke after Wagner's death and asked him where his book was and when it was going to be published, he replied, "Never, because we understand now that he was the soul of us all."

Personally, I had no intercourse with Wagner which was not pleasant. It is true that he knew how much I admired him. Did I not one day tell him, when sitting beside him at a supper at the Princess Hatzfeldt's, how overwhelmed I was at being seated next to the man to whom I owed such immense joys, whereas he owed me nothing. "It is unfortunate," he said, "that those who understand have no money."

But this admiration did not prevent my one day expressing an opinion which might have annoyed him. I do not know what devil urged me one evening, when I was alone with him, to tell him that certain parts of the "Bridal March" from *Lohengrin* seemed to me rather banal. When I think of it to-day I cannot imagine how

[1] Josef Rubinstein must not be confused with the celebrated Antoine Rubinstein, the greatest enemy of Wagner.

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on earth I had the courage to make this pronouncement, but at the same time I am glad I did it because I found how exempt the nature of this man was from anything petty.

Without being in the least annoyed, in a perfectly amiable tone he asked me where I had heard the opera.

"I have heard it everywhere," I said—"at Dresden, Petersburg, Leipzig, and Berlin."

"Yes," he said, "and everywhere they play it badly. I will play it to you."

He went to the piano and played it, and though his hands were far from being those of a pianist, he made me hear the piece in a perfectly different time from that to which I was accustomed. Not only had my remarks not annoyed him, but they had amused him, and he went on playing and singing.[1]

Italian society understood very little of the immense reputation which men like Liszt and Wagner enjoyed in Germany and Austria, and one often saw odd little scenes. Thus, for example, at one of the evening parties Princess Metternich was giving in honour of Liszt, while she and I were looking at and criticising a family portrait, painted by Kirchmayr, in the next room, a young lady, well known in Venetian society, came into the room, and going straight up to Liszt, said to him, "Sir, they have asked me to sing something. Will you accompany me?"

The cheek with which she asked this favour gave the measure of her ignorance as to the exceptional position which Liszt occupied in the world, and the impossibility of suggesting such a thing to him. Princess Metternich and I could only smile, but Liszt, without even turning to the lady in question, said dryly, "No, madam."

After two or three minutes Liszt went back to the drawing-room, which was full of people, and said rather

[1] In his biography of Wagner, Glasenapp does not make any allusion to this episode, which proves to me that Wagner did not speak about it. It was only after having finished the "Bridal March" that Wagner began to sing me (as Glasenapp says) the scene where Fafner appears to Siegfried, and the waking up of Brünnhilde.

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loudly, " Hohenlohe, come and sing ' The Two Grenadiers ' of Schumann. I will accompany you." [1]

The ways of the world were different in Italy from those of many other countries at that time. Here, for instance, is one example that rather astonished foreigners. I do not know whether it was on the initiative of Wagner or some Venetian musician that it had been arranged to give, under Wagner's direction, the symphony which Liszt composed in his youth. In Germany and in Russia everybody knew that as a conductor he had not his equal in Europe, and there was not a conservatoire anywhere which would not have been overjoyed to have the chance of seeing him conduct. Wagner certainly did it to give the musicians of Venice pleasure. But what was his astonishment when—a few days after the performance—a bill for 2,000 francs was sent in to him. He had it paid, of course.

A few days later, at a party at Princess Hatzfeldt's, Frontali, the first violin, a good fellow, and everybody's friend, but without any knowledge of the world, handed Liszt a little packet, made out of four ten-franc bills, which was his part of the 2,000 francs, and which he did not wish to keep. Liszt, without saying anything, simply turned his back—and it was very difficult to make Frontali understand what a deplorable mistake he had made.

The face of Liszt as an old man was amazingly interesting, because of the way the expression, and even the very shape, changed according to his moods. Ladies would get up at six in the morning to go and contemplate his praying in church and to admire his look of beatitude. It was especially his thick and almost black eyebrows which accentuated his various expressions to an extraordinary degree. One day when he was making Frontali read one of his violin compositions, the latter stopped

[1] It was that Prince Hohenlohe who was son of the Stadthalter of Strasburg and nephew of the Hohenlohe the friend of Liszt, with whom he lived some time at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli.

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suddenly at a passage he could not play, saying, "But it can't be done." At this phrase the face of Liszt, seated at the piano, darkened. He drew his great brows together, his lips tightened and the corners went down, his closed eyes disappeared under the eyebrows, but he continued to play the chord on which Frontali had stopped.

The latter, seeing this, put all his efforts into trying to play the phrase, first a little better, then still better, at last quite well. I watched Liszt all the time—his face was far more interesting than the piece of music. Every improvement in Frontali's playing was reflected in his features. His lips untightened, his eyebrows lifted, and his eyes opened. It would be impossible to represent more graphically the change from a stormy day to beautiful sunny weather. But directly afterwards, probably remembering the remark just made to him that a passage of his composition could not be played, his features assumed once more their severe expression, and he dryly repeated Frontali's phrase in a belated reply, "It can't be done. Yes, it *can*, when people aren't asleep."

Liszt's face changed completely when, as he composed, some musical phrase absorbed him and he let the muscles of his face drop, forgetting that he no longer had any teeth. His mouth went up towards his ears, the point of his nose went down, becoming more aquiline, and the chin protruded forward—all this framed by his beautiful white hair coming almost to the middle of his cheek. When I saw this transformation, I asked myself each time, What on earth does that face remind me of? . . . Very clearly of a lion—less clearly of the Sphinx—and sometimes of Dante.

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CHAPTER XIV

One of the men who were most petted at the Vendramin Palace was Herr v. Stein, a descendant of Goethe's celebrated friend. His devotion to Wagner was public property, and his admiration for the philosophy of "Compassion" which is developed in *Parsifal* gained him the interest of those who wished to know more of and go deeper into this subject. Baroness Uxcull, at that time staying in Venice, wanted to seize the opportunity of instructing herself further, and asked Herr v. Stein to fix the day and hour that he would be free to initiate her into the depths of this philosophy, to which the philosopher agreed very willingly. I happened to be present at this interview; but as no one expressed the desire to see me take part in the intended lesson, I ventured to ask how long it would last.

"About two hours," said v. Stein.

"Very well," said the Baroness, "from two to four o'clock I will keep free for you."

"And I," I said, "will come and knock at your door at four, if only to see whether the Philosophy of Compassion has managed to inspire you with a little pity for your admirers."

As the clock struck four, I knocked at Baroness Uxcull's door. She was lying on a *chaise-longue*, whilst v. Stein, still standing, was pronouncing the last words of his discourse with all the gestures employed on these occasions by the young candidates for professorships. After a couple of bows, he sat down.

"Have you understood everything, Baroness?" I asked.

"I think so," she replied with conviction.

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"Well, then, will you have the courage to initiate me into the charms of this philosophy in the presence of your mentor?"

"Certainly," she answered.

I sat down, and the Baroness began. Those who never had the luck to see that seductive woman in moments when she wanted to prove the quickness of her perceptions, simply did not know her.

She spoke for five minutes, with all the necessary stressing of the really important factors, whilst gliding over the unimportant ones. And this with such a mastery of the subject that poor v. Stein was completely dumbfounded.

"Is that all?" she said, smiling at the philosopher. "Did I understand you?"

"That is all," he replied, as if terrified by her lucidity. Perhaps he compared it with his own and that made him feel upset.

A few days later I met him again. Having heard that I had studied at Heidelberg and could answer certain questions concerning the life of the professors there, v. Stein announced to me that he wished to consult me about a problem that he must decide and on which his future depended. He asked for an interview, and I received him the same day.

After a few generalisations completely foreign to the subject which had brought him hither, he told me that he could not make up his mind to whom he ought to listen—his father, who advised him to choose a career as professor in one of the German Universities, or his own inclination, which led him to devote himself to the education of Siegfried, Wagner's son, then a boy of ten or so.

I saw that I had before me one of those enthusiasts found only in Germany—good, noble, generous, and ready to devote himself, but living always in the clouds, in sentimental exaggeration, and incapable of seeing that white is white and black is black.

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"The reply to this question would be simple enough, Herr v. Stein," I said, "if, before deciding which career you are to choose, you would examine yourself as to your capabilities for fulfilling the requirements which either of these two situations would impose upon you."

"Yes," he said, "I have thought a great deal about it, have had entire nights without sleeping, and all the same I have not been able to decide anything."

"Are you convinced that you really possess the serious educational qualities necessary for the bringing up of a boy?" I said. "If not, you will do him harm, without doing any good to yourself. Don't you think so?"

He was incapable of giving me a precise reply to this simple question, therefore I concluded that it had not yet occurred to him.

"Dear Herr v. Stein," I then said, "your father was right. Follow his advice and become a professor at the University. There, at least, you cannot do any harm to anyone except yourself, because at first you will only be a private tutor and the students will be at liberty to attend your lectures or not."

More saddened than illuminated by my reply, the young man said good-bye to me, and I never saw him again.

Madame Pinelli and I went one day to the Wagners' for the evening. We found Madame Cosima sitting on a sofa before a round table in the middle of which burned a lamp with a great shade, concentrating the light on the people round the table, and plunging the rest of the room in a mysterious obscurity. Madame Cosima looked very picturesque in a costume (*à la dogaressa*) in raised red silk on a gold foundation.

We sat down comfortably round the table and presently an animated conversation began between us, while Wagner, after having said "How do you do?" began walking silently up and down in those parts of the room which were in shade.

"You know," said Cosima, "that Herr v. Stein has left us. He has gone to Germany."

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"And he has done well," I replied, "for that proves he has at last come to a decision."

"He is a very good and excellent man, Herr v. Stein," continued Madame Cosima.

"I don't deny it. That is the impression he gave me, although unfortunately he never knows what to do with his goodness, or whom he can benefit by its abundance."

"But don't you think," replied Cosima, "that the cause of his indecision really lies in the richness of his nature?"

"You are very generous, madame," I said, bowing.

"But, tell us, M. Wolkoff, what do you think of him?" she said in German, the better to express her question ("Was halten Sie von ihm?"), because in this word "halten" there is a whole world of ideas which cannot be expressed in French, and the sense of the question could not be translated but by "What do you think of the intrinsic value of this man?"—the word "intrinsic" addressing itself to his moral and intellectual sides, and to his character, etc.

"I think that if one had to express in direct words the most obvious side of his nature, one would say that he was an enthusiast with limitations," I replied, also in German, where the word "borniert" is rather less crude than the word "borné" in French.

"Enthusiasm," cried Madame Cosima—"is not that a very beautiful thing?"

"Without doubt," I replied, "but it depends on the object. He who invents, or creates, or produces, must have enthusiasm. It is not only a beautiful thing, it is the *sine qua non* of success. Whereas he who does not create and does not produce does not need this quality. He must . . ." And as I did not find the exact words in which to finish the idea:

"He must pay" ("Der muss zahlen"), cried Wagner, coming up to the table in three great strides, making an expressive gesture by raising a finger to the sky and then turning it downwards.

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"Thank you, Master—that is it," I cried.

Everyone laughed, so unexpected was the apparition of Wagner. As to the sense of his words, everyone who has read his literary works knows what he meant.

This plunge into our conversation had put the Master into a good temper, and forgetting that he was feeling "seedy," he began to walk up and down again, taking part in the talk. His gaiety had come back to such an extent that when Madame Pinelli and I, having said good-bye to Madame Cosima, were going down the staircase, Wagner accompanied us, telling us all sorts of little stories, which he knew better than anyone how to tell, and he went with us to the bottom of the staircase—not very far, for the Wagners lived on the entresol—without paying the slightest attention to our prayers that he would not do so, for going upstairs was very bad for him.

. . . . . .

It was the thirteenth of February—a misty day—just the sort of day novelists describe when they want to prepare you for a coming tragedy. I was awaiting Daniela von Bülow, who was coming with Joukowsky to pay my new, scarcely finished house a visit before she left for Berlin. The time fixed was four. Five o'clock struck, and as nobody turned up I left the house, abusing my friend, and astonished that he had not sent me word he could not come—he the most polite of human beings. As I passed near the Iron Bridge I met the painters Passini and Ruben, who were waiting for the steamboat.

"You know the news," said Passini, looking at me with strange eyes—eyes that I had seen before when he told me of Salvanini's suicide.

"No; I don't know anything about what is happening in the town, because I have been waiting for Daniela and Joukowsky at home."

"Well, then, you had better know," said Passini, "that there is a rumour throughout Venice that Wagner is dead, and we are going to the Vendramin Palace to find out the truth."

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"What you tell me frightens me," I said, "for my missed appointment looks as if it confirms the horrible news."

At this moment young Frontali, the excellent violinist, passed, and we told him our fears, and all four took the boat, which got us to the Palace Vendramin in twenty-five minutes. At the bottom of the staircase stood a group of idlers—men and women whose faces boded no good news.

In truth—Wagner was dead. We sent in our names to Miss Daniela and asked to see Joukowsky.

In the great, spacious, well-lit antechamber, where but a few days before the Master had accompanied us to the door so gaily, telling us anecdotes, declaiming and imitating Jews, stood Daniela, dumb and in floods of tears. We held out our hands in silence, and Passini—though the least Wagnerian of us all, but an intimate friend of the family—let fall one or two heartfelt exclamations of "How dreadful!" Then Joukowsky appeared, sobbing, his arms crossed on his breast and his head bowed. We pressed his hands without speaking. What struck me at this moment was the callousness of Momolo. Sitting nonchalantly in a big armchair, his elbow leaning on his knees, and his head in his hands, he looked at us with an indifferent, stupid expression. Idealised by Wagner and his family, this gondolier of Joukowsky's—in whose eyes they always thought they saw something sad and fatalistic—could only have appeared to them in that moment as he really was, simply a brute. After several minutes of painful silence Daniela went sobbing out of the room, and Joukowsky told us in a few words how they had heard the news of his death.

As usual the family was assembled in the dining-room, waiting for Wagner, who did not come,—as an asthmatic attack kept him to his room. A sudden violent peal at the bell caused Madame Wagner to leave the table and run to her husband's room. When she was gone, the family went on talking and laughing, and at the moment they least

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expected a servant came sobbing and announced that the Master was dead. Cosima, having found him unconscious, sent for Dr. Keppler, who arrived after the pulse had stopped beating. A sudden stroke, choking, or a rupture of the heart—who knows? He had been ill a long time and several celebrated doctors had diagnosed heart trouble. Wagner only spoke to me about it the day before and laughed at the idea that, to massage him, they wanted to send for a celebrated woman masseuse from Berlin. He himself thought it was his stomach that ailed him, and according to himself he could no longer digest anything. Till the masseuse came, it was Keppler who massaged him, but he hurt Wagner, and when, as was his wont, he walked up and down his room in his black satin jacket, it seemed to pain him to button up the garment to make himself tidy.

Joukowsky told us that Cosima was in the chamber of death and that nobody dared go in, not even the doctor, not even Daniela. So we separated, all of us firmly determined to have the death-mask of the Master taken next day by the best sculptor in Venice. Passini and Ruben took upon themselves to put this plan into execution.

It is easy to imagine my astonishment and despair when, next day, I learnt from Ruben that it was no use thinking of the mask. In spite of all the prayers and protestations of Passini, of Ruben himself, and of the sculptor Benvenuti—who had come ready with everything necessary for the work—and in spite of painful discussions lasting several hours, neither Daniela nor Joukowsky had allowed anyone to go into the dead man's room to persuade Cosima to go away. The whole operation of preparing the mould would only have required twenty minutes; these twenty minutes no one had been able to obtain, and Wagner would have to disappear—disintegrate—without leaving palpable traces of the last moments on earth when his body still resembled the living Wagner. This idea tormented me to such a point that, although ill myself, I determined to take the boat and go to the Vendramin Palace.

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Without going into the room where Daniela, Passini, and all the family were sitting crying, I sent for Joukowsky to the anteroom and we began a conversation which lasted two hours at least.

"We have positively decided," he said, "that the death-mask shall not be made."

"And I," I answered, "say it shall be."

"No; for the frivolous pleasure which people may get out of looking at the mask of Wagner is infinitely less important than the pain which his wife Cosima would suffer at being taken away from the corpse."

All this he repeated to me in a resigned tone, his head bowed, his eyes swimming, with all the obstinacy of a nature in the highest degree idealistic, honourable, devoted, but weak as a rag. I think, for my part, I was as eloquent as I could be, and certainly more uncompromising than ever.

"Don't you understand my idea, Joukowsky?" I said to him. "You haven't grasped the situation. You are taking upon yourself a responsibility in the face of a whole world of people. Millions of idealists—even more idealist than yourself—will want to see the features of one who has procured them the most immense happiness. You forget that the enjoyment, which you call frivolous, comes from a sentiment which takes its rise in the profoundest depths of the human heart, and that it is the expression of an interest which—both from the intellectual, the moral, and perhaps also from the national point of view—may have immense importance; and you forget that it was owing to your father that Pouckine's mask was made. You grant twenty minutes more beside the corpse to a sorrow which is just as poignant away from as close to it. In a few hours poor miserable Cosima will have to be taken away by force. She will have gained nothing—and the whole world will have lost."

Joukowsky, crossing his arms on his breast, replied:

"She will have gained those twenty minutes."

Then appeared Daniela. She explained to me that it

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was she and Joukowsky who had decided not to have the mask taken, as for nothing in the world would she disturb her mother at such a moment. I begged Daniela to think of the responsibility she was taking upon herself. "If you were authorised by your mother," I said, "it would be different. But no! you are deciding the question without taking the trouble to speak to her on the subject."

Anyone can understand how just then it exasperated me to know that the existence or the non-existence of the mask depended on the goodwill of two perfectly self-satisfied people, of whom one was a stranger and the other not the daughter of Wagner. Daniela added that quite apart from the question of the suffering she would undergo in persuading her mother to leave the death-chamber, the idea of seeing the mask sold and in the possession of everybody was most antipathetic to her. To which I ventured to reply that as it was a question of satisfying the sympathetic sentiment of millions of individuals, it would be better to let her antipathetic sentiment subside. For the matter of that, I added, to quiet her, the mould of the mask could belong to her if she wished it; but that there was not a moment to be lost and that I would not shrink from any means of obtaining it, even if I had to speak to Madame Cosima herself. Without replying anything, Daniela left the room.

Joukowsky, who was present during this scene, begged me to go.

"It is useless, my dear friend," I said. "I shall wait for the doctor; and you will ask him if it is wise to let a poor woman stay alone with a dead body for more than twenty-five hours."

Dr. Keppler, who was also our family doctor, arrived at four o'clock, and Joukowsky went to meet him. "Do you think, Doctor," asked he, "that it is already necessary to ask Madame Wagner to leave her husband's room?" He had his back towards me, and whilst he spoke I made as expressive a sign as I could with my

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right arm to make Keppler understand that at any cost it must be done, and he perfectly understood.

"Of course she must leave the room," he said firmly. "Do you want her to be ill?"

This little scene decided the question, and if it had not taken place the mask would never have existed.

"What did I tell you?" said I to Joukowsky. "Go now and tell Daniela what the doctor's orders are. And when you have taken Madame Cosima into her own room, stand at the door and keep guard."

Joukowsky left us and Keppler came towards me, smiling a little.

"Thank you," I said. "You understood. The question at stake is about the mask—which must certainly be modelled. As you did not know what it was all about, you might have admitted the possibility of waiting a few more hours, and then it would have been very difficult for you to go back on your decision and the mask could not have been made. Wagner having been dead for twenty-six hours, every hour now his features will become less distinct; and anyway, who can guarantee that Benvenuti will consent to come back in the night, after having wasted hours waiting this morning? Don't forget, he is not just a common plasterer, but the first sculptor in Venice, and he is simply doing it out of pure good-nature. I will go and beg him to come at once, and I only hope he will listen to me."

At this moment Daniela came in, and Keppler repeated what he had said about the necessity of getting her mother to leave the room. Unable any longer to give the wish not to upset her mother as a reason for refusing to have the mask made, Daniela was obliged to authorise me to fetch Benvenuti, but only on condition that the mould should belong to her, and that the sculptor should be told this.

I accepted her conditions, and Daniela went off to try to get her mother to come away, when Keppler came back

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to announce that she had left the dead man's room, and that we could get to work.

It was now five o'clock and I saw there was not a moment to be lost.

"Let me have an hour," I said to the doctor, "for God knows where Benvenuti can be found."

I went immediately to Wagner's bedroom. He was half-sitting up in bed, covered with a rich brocade of green silk. I had never seen that splendid head under better conditions from the point of view of art. His paleness, though far from being that of a corpse, only accentuated the characteristic lines of his features, and at that moment they were extraordinarily distinguished and sweet. I was filled with satisfaction at seeing him as I saw him then, and I was glad to think that every Wagnerian could have the same satisfaction in contemplating the features of this genius who had given them such rapture. I stayed a few minutes by the dead man, and then I went to call the gondoliers to be taken as quickly as possible to Benvenuti, whose address I did not even know. A tip of ten francs had its effect, and I soon arrived at the sculptor's house, whom luckily I found at home, and to whom I explained the motive of my visit.

"But, dear sir," said the poor sculptor, "I waited vainly for four hours this morning trying to get permission to get to work. I have not the slightest wish to return to the Vendramin Palace; and even if I do, can you guarantee that this time it will not be in vain?"

"Yes, I can guarantee that; but, alas! I must warn you that the mould has to be given back to Daniela."

"Why?" he asked.

"It is her whim," I replied. "But it was impossible to act otherwise, and I had to consent."

Benvenuti remained thoughtful.

"It is in the name of Wagner and of all Wagnerians that I ask you, dearest Master; not in the name of his family, who, prostrate with grief, are incapable of making a sane decision. They have all lost their heads: but

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you, be generous and come; my gondola is waiting for you."

The moment I arrived at the Vendramin Palace I saw, to my great distress, that, instead of waiting for the sculptor, they had already carried the body of Wagner into another room, and had laid him, in his shirt, on a table. The movement having caused the blood to go to the head, his face no longer looked the same. Tired out by the horrible discussions I had had with Daniela and Joukowsky, and painfully impressed by the sight of the poor dead body, the face of which no longer had the fine plastic qualities I had been struck with the day before, I left the Vendramin Palace without seeing anybody else, and hoping never to have to recur again to this regrettable episode.

But I was wrong.

One day someone told me that my friend Molmenti had the mask of Wagner in his possession. I cannot remember what time elapsed between the time I heard this and the day the mould was made. I can only recall that on hearing this news I expressed my astonishment on several occasions and to different people, declaring that, if anyone had a right, it was myself, for it was due to me alone that it existed at all. Evidently someone or other thought my remarks just, for one day the mask came to me, as it were out of the blue. I have never known—nor have I ever wished to know—to whom I owe this favour. All this happened between 1884 and 1886, or thereabouts. I had dismissed the matter from my mind, when suddenly, during my sojourn in Russia, I received a letter dated the 6th of June 1911, and signed "Stephen Kekule von Stradonitz, gentleman-in-waiting to the Court of Schaumburg-Lippe," in which he told me that it was Joukowsky who had given him my address, and that it was Madame Thode who had given him Joukowsky's, as he asked for certain facts he wanted to know relevant to the taking of Wagner's death-mask. This Dr. Kekule knew that I possessed one, and thought that

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there were four in all. "You are evidently the person," he wrote, "who knows most about the conditions under which the mould was taken, and I should be most particularly grateful if you would send me a detailed account of what happened."

I wrote to the gentleman, whose existence I had been unaware of up to that moment, and replied that I had all the details he could possibly want about the circumstances, but that, as I was going to Bayreuth, it would be easy for him to look me up there, and that I would prefer to give him my account personally. I arrived at Bayreuth with my daughter, and told Countess Wolkenstein about the letter I have just quoted, and also that I intended to meet Dr. Kekule.

"Please don't," said Countess Wolkenstein. "The Wagners have never been on good terms with this man. He might write something that would make Daniela very ill, and that must be avoided at all costs, because she has a serious weakness of the heart. In any case," added the Countess, "it will all appear in Glasenapp's biography of Wagner."

I promised not to write anything to Kekule, nor to look him up—in fact, not to take any steps about it.

Not having heard from me, Dr. Kekule sent me a year after—in a letter dated the 4th of August 1912—an article of his published in the *Sammler Daheim* (*Collector at Home*), in which he described the episode of the mask, quoting page 776 of the sixth volume of Glasenapp's work, *The Life of Richard Wagner*, which I had not yet seen. This is how he describes the episode:

"'In the course of the afternoon,' Madame Thode[1] tells us, 'the artists again came and attacked me about the death-mask. Passini, it is true, gave way; but Wolkoff hurt me terribly by his uncompromising judgment of what he called my selfishness. I had to *bid him be silent* and refused to listen to all his protestations. But when in the evening Dr. Keppler told me quietly and clearly that

[1] Daniela von Bülow had married M. Thode.

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I was doing wrong, and that Mama herself would not thank me, not to speak of the disciples and friends, then I gave way, and even stayed during the process of pouring the plaster on—without, however, telling Mama anything about it.' "

I must admit that this description astonished me not a little. But in spite of the supplications of Kekule to complete the story in a detailed article which he wished to write for the *Richard Wagner Year Book*, I did not answer his letters. The promise I had given to Countess Wolkenstein was too recent, and the idea of injuring Madame Thode's health compelled me to silence.

Now that I have promised to write my Memoirs, to satisfy the demands of my friends, I think it is important that I should re-memorise certain facts which will perhaps interest Wagnerians. And the tale I have just told concerning Wagner's mask has at least this importance, that it is absolutely true.

It was written two or three days after my annoyances at the Vendramin Palace, in a letter I meant to send to Baroness Uxcull, but which for some reason or other never went. The letter still exists—and it was this letter which I wanted to send to Kekule. Nobody can understand better than I can all that Mademoiselle Daniela had to go through at the time she was obliged to have painful conversations with those who thought differently from herself on the question of taking the death-mask, so I do not wonder that her memory should have failed her when she told Glasenapp her recollections.

It was not the explanations of Keppler that caused her to alter her opinion, for she had heard the same all the morning from Passini, Ruben, and Benvenuti. It was only when she could no longer excuse her refusal by the desire not to disturb her mother that she was forced to consent. And even then she only did it on the condition that the mould should belong to her—i.e. that nobody should have the mask.

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It is apparent from the letters of Kekule von Stradonitz, who tried to find the mask in 1911, that nobody for twenty-five years had been able to procure it. In saying that I accuse her of egoism, as we read in Glasenapp, I am ready to confess that Madame Thode is far too amiable, for I *think* I accused her of many other things. As to the silence which she pretends she reduced me to, I was still arguing with Joukowsky when she went out of the room!

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CHAPTER XV

I CANNOT remember at what representation of *Parsifal* the little scene I want to describe took place, but in any case it was after Wagner's death.

I was dining with some English ladies at the table d'hôte, when I caught sight of Antoine Rubinstein at the end of the table—Antoine Rubinstein, who had sworn never to come to Bayreuth. I jumped up and ran to him to express my joy. "All are dead," he said to me in Russian, "and I have come."

The word "all" expressed a world of things difficult to translate.

"I am very glad to see you," I said, "and I am going at once to tell Baroness Schleinitz of your arrival."

Upon this, we separated. Baroness Schleinitz—delighted to hear that Rubinstein was in Bayreuth—asked me to bring him round after the first act.

"Well," I cried from far off, the moment I spied the new-comer, "what do you think of it? What is your impression?"

He replied in Russian, and with an accent of the most profound conviction, "From the beginning to the end, there is not a single decent note."

"In that case," I replied, "it is quite useless to take you to Baroness Schleinitz."

That artists are usually antagonistic to each other is a truism. They are often jealous of the success of a colleague, envying him his glory or his money. But amongst musicians it is even more than that—it amounts to hatred. And yet they must know that it is just in music that nothing can be actually proved. Subjectivity dominates it, and the laws of harmony and counterpoint

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may be scrupulously observed in a given piece of music without deciding its value.

To explain this antagonism of Rubinstein to Wagner, people have accused the former of jealousy of the latter's success. But those who knew Rubinstein knew what a good fellow he was—and how, with his broad ideas, he was incapable of mean feelings. No; his antagonism was based on a genuine conviction, and unhappily nowhere are convictions so strong as where they have no serious origin. In truth, what sense can convictions have in an art where good and evil, beauty and ugliness, are all based solely on the appreciations of our feelings? And this being the case, what is there to be surprised at in the fact that men who have developed these sentiments under totally dissimilar conditions are disagreeably impressed by effects which are in contradiction with their private method of feeling? Some people say in such cases, "They don't understand each other." But that is an erroneous way of explaining a situation in which everything is reduced to feeling and not to understanding. The fact is that, from the point of view of art, music presents a certain peculiarity which contributes in developing, amongst musicians, sentiments of animosity and even of hatred which it would be difficult to find amongst painters, sculptors, or architects. The reason is that the art of the latter is intimately connected with the laws of nature, which condemn the absurd, and protect the artist against exaggerations of every kind. Whereas the art of the musician permits him to develop his feelings by trying to find a musical equivalent for each of them, up to any limit that his imagination can admit —or his ear put up with.

As musical consciousness develops in the musician in association with the impressions he receives during his whole life, his music becomes the language of all the sentiments that dominate his soul. Beginning with love and finishing with hatred, everything finds a musical expression. But when the musician hears a language which is totally different from the one that has served to form

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his own soul, he suffers, and considers this language as a contradiction to all the musical dreams which have made his life. The painter, the sculptor, the architect, produce works which represent something outside themselves, whilst the musician reproduces nothing of the kind —he only reproduces his own soul.

If the compositions of certain musicians awaken hatred in the hearts of their brother artists, others only awaken disgust. See, for instance, how Wagner speaks of Gounod at the time of his great fiasco in Paris:

"When all this was over, I remained on good terms with Gounod. People told me that everywhere he defended me with enthusiasm and that he exclaimed, 'My God! Give *me* the chance of such a fall!' To reward him I made him a present of the score of *Tristan and Isolde*, because the way he behaved delighted me all the more that no sentiment of friendship could have forced *me* to listen to *Faust*."

That looks like a bad joke! Well, it is not one, for Wagner would certainly have suffered in listening to *Faust*, as a man would suffer who was made to hear lies and vulgar calumnies against his best friend.

In general, musicians forget that as nothing in their art can be actually proved, appreciation may be born of sentiments that evolve up and down through the following phases: agreeable or disagreeable astonishment, pleasure, admiration, enthusiasm; diminution of the latter—boredom, indifference.

One would be tempted to believe that in basing their criticism on feelings, critics would keep in reserve some indisputable objective arguments to protect their own feelings against the attacks of contrary feeling. But this is not so. See, for example, how Pierre Lalo speaks of Verdi:

"He started by writing music—generally very bad—where the idea and the emotions, often striking by their virility, offended by their vulgarity. And from this,

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guided by the admirable instinct which urged him both towards a more precise dramatic truth and towards a more noble, more delicate, and a more profound art, he raised himself by great efforts first to *Otello* and then up to *Falstaff*. [The inequality of the two works, to which people often attribute the same value, must be noted in passing.] It is true that *Otello* shows a wonderful progress and renaissance, but the transformation is not yet finished, nor is the unity perfect; side by side with truth and depth there is an obvious vulgarity.

"None of these faults is found in *Falstaff*."

What must people who have loved Verdi for sixty years and who have wept with emotion on hearing his *Il Trovatore*, *Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, and *Aïda* think on reading this? What must they think of themselves, if they take the opinion of Pierre Lalo? That they have been dupes or idiots, and that if Verdi had died before having written *Otello* and *Falstaff* he would have been nothing but a second-rate musician! But, as if this was not bad enough, to make his admiration for the beauties of *Falstaff* more intense, M. Pierre Lalo makes comparisons through which his feelings of hatred show. "And from all this," he cries, "from this magnificent lesson, where the classical Italian spirit spoke so nobly and so clearly, what has come?—the sordidness and poverty of *La Tosca*, *Pagliacci*, and *Madame Butterfly*."

Without doubt he is sincere and sure that he is right, and all the more so that the most famous musicians of to-day are probably of his opinion.

Perhaps even we might be tempted to let the word "poverty" pass, for it may be used in a relative sense, especially in connection with an appreciable quantity of certain processes generally recognised and admitted in music. But the word "sordid"—what sense can it have? Is there a combination of tones which can express either nobility, courage, or sordidness?

Excited by musical rapture, and thanks to the association of ideas, certain oral impressions can produce on some musicians the sensations which visual impressions produce.

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"What a marvellous success," cries M. Gabriel Faure, speaking of *Blue Beard*, the opera of M. Paul Ducast, "is that passage in which the composer describes the rivers of gems falling in cascades! How dazzling—what variety—what an inventive genius the musician shows himself in that fantastic rush of emeralds—of sapphires—of pearls and of rubies! And again, how one divines, when in turn the diamonds appear, by their white light, one of the ideas that dominate the work, and how the music expresses at this point the passion for lucidity!"

If he had said "expresses for me," one could compliment him on his fine oral perceptions. But in generalising the possibility of expressing by sound "a passion for lucidity," he simply talks nonsense.

One evening that I spent with Baroness Schleinitz at Bayreuth, there was no one in the drawing-room but herself, her husband, Daniela von Bülow, a young Count Arnim, son of the one who had squabbles with Bismarck in Paris, and the celebrated conductor Mottl, who was reading the score of *Parsifal* admirably, but who was thumping much.

I do not remember what we talked about, but when I left the Baroness it was very late. Count Arnim and I went to the famous beer-house where all the artists used to meet together. A group of eight or ten people were sitting round a big table on wooden benches, arguing heatedly. So as not to disturb them, we sat down some way off, putting up with a rather dark part of the hall to drink our beer in. I was occupied with the draining of my Sitchovo marshes, and Count Arnim was doing the same for his Prussian estate, so we had plenty to talk about, when suddenly our attention was attracted by one of the men at the large table, who had got up and was making all sorts of wild statements, standing. He wanted to start, he said, a society which should be composed of several categories. No one could be admitted except Germans—for only Germans could really understand the beauty of the works of the Master. In the first category

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would be inscribed those who admit the superiority of all that the Master had written, whether in music or literature; in the second, those who only admit his pre-eminence as a musician.

"I protest," I said out loud.

The gentleman (I was told afterwards that it was the banker Feustel) turned towards us, although he could hardly see me.

"I protest in the name of the Master," I continued. "Why do you want to make him less great than he is? Do Germans admit that the English are the only people to understand or to act Shakespeare? Does not the greatness of Shakespeare put him above the frontiers of his country?"

Whilst the speaker was trying to find words with which to answer me, another man, who was with a friend in a neighbouring room, said out loud: "I am not a German, but I love and admire Wagner as much as the most Wagnerian of Germans."

The orator was disconcerted and could not reply, either to me or to his other interlocutor. In the meantime I rose and went to the group sitting round the table. The men got up and introduced themselves one by one, bowing and stating their names and Christian names, in the German fashion, and I had to do the same, after which they made a place for me beside the celebrated Fräulein Malten.

What became of Arnim, how long I stayed with my new friends, how much beer I drank, what we talked about, or how I got home, have faded from my mind. It was only next day that I found out that the man who had shared my opinion was no other than the Duke of Sermoneta, who was with a Count Arco.

A few days afterwards I was back at Venice.

After much searching I at last found a pretty courtyard in which I could have a model without his being seen from outside, or myself being troubled by the curiosity of the people of the house. It was in a deserted palace at San

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Barnaba, where nobody lived except an old caretaker, who really had nothing left to take care of, but whom the proprietor, out of pity, did not send away. Half the windows in this palace were broken, and the only habitable room was the one which she occupied. Every morning I worked in this courtyard from ten to twelve o'clock, for the walls of the palace were so high that during those two hours, in the month of April, it was still in shadow.

Very soon the caretaker, who was always knitting stockings, asked me if her presence bothered me, to which I replied in the negative; and then—always knitting—she would come and sit down every day a few feet away from my chair. My work went on for three weeks, and during all this time the old woman tried her best to get me to talk. However, when she saw me absorbed by my work she did not open her mouth, and it was only at the moments when she saw me pleased and cheerful that she would dare to make a remark or venture an opinion.

Soon I realised that she was not a woman of the people, but of the middle classes, who, at the time of the Austrian War, had lost everything she possessed. Now she had nothing to live on but a few pence a day which the proprietor of the palace gave her. In reality, she was dying of hunger; I happened to notice a horrible piece of more or less putrid meat that she was buying at the butcher's with her poor daily pennies, and in spite of that this woman was so cheerful that I could not help admiring her.

"You have nothing to lose," I said, "and no suffering can move you any more. Do you know that that is an enormous force?"

"Yes, everything is indifferent to me. I do not want anything. If I had to die to-morrow, well, so much the better"—and she said that cheerfully and with conviction.

"Instead of living in this damp and desolate ruin, were I you, I should have a tub on the Lido and get into it like Diogenes, and the people who come there would give you so much money that you would be able to eat meat every day."

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She laughed heartily at the idea of putting herself into a tub on the Lido.

All this proved that the old woman, in spite of her miserable surroundings, was not the least unhappy. So I said to her one day that many women who had money were more unhappy than she, and that to have the good things of the world is not a condition that ensures happiness.

She understood that I realised that her moral force consisted in the fact that she had no desires. "I do not want anything," she said.

"Have you no wishes?" I asked.

"None, none—except one. If I knew that *that* could be realised!"

"And what is that wish?"

"To eat well for a year, and then to die."

"That is an illusion. After having eaten well for a year you would have changed; your moral force would have disappeared and you would want to live longer."

"No, no! To eat for a year and then to die, and to die in happiness—because—a year!—that is enough for anyone."

"Remember what you have just said. You are quite gay, strong, and happy in your poverty. You would be lost and unhappy if your desire could be accomplished."

The evening of this same day, at a dinner at Princess Hatzfeldt's, where there were a great many people, I told the story of this woman, and the Princess said at once that she would be delighted to pay the cost of a year of happiness.

"Let her come to-morrow and dine in my kitchen," she said. "She shall have a little table all to herself and shall eat as I do."

So the next day I went to the old woman. "Think again," I said, "of your desire for happiness—to eat well for a year, and then die."

"If the thing were possible, I should be contented with less than a year," she replied.

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"Very well, be content; you shall eat well for a year."

The old woman laughed and laughed, though I assured her I was speaking seriously. It was very difficult to convince her, and it was not until she had learned the address of the house to which she was to go at 12.30 o'clock the same day that she realised and began to thank me.

"Don't thank me," I said. "I think I have done a bad action. To-day you do not understand your misfortune; in a year you will be a most unhappy woman."

I went to see her next day. She was transfigured! With rags that she had probably kept from her better days, or borrowed somewhere, she had arranged a curious, grotesque, threadbare costume which she tried to embellish by pinning some artificial forget-me-nots on her breast. "That is how I dress to go to the Princess's," she said. "In a corner of the kitchen I have my little table, and yesterday the Princess herself gave me a bottle of wine. You are angels—angels!" she repeated. I thought her shouts of laughter would never cease.

"My work in this courtyard is finished and I shall not come and see you any more, but do not forget what I have prophesied about you," I told her.

Two months later we met in the street. "I have so much to tell you," she cried, as she came near. "If you only knew how those gondoliers deceive the Princess, and how the cook——"

"You are interfering with things with which you have nothing to do. Your duty is to eat and go straight away after having eaten." I felt that probably the Princess had suffered all sorts of annoyances because of this woman. Her gondoliers—all more or less rascals—would no doubt find a thousand reasons to try to get rid of a witness who saw how, with the help of the cook, they stole all sorts of provisions, and, to prove that my doubts were well founded, the Princess never mentioned the old woman to me.

I met her again in the month of July. "The Princess

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has gone away because of the heat," she said, "but she has left me 200 francs to feed me until she comes back."

It was not until the next year, in the month of March, that I saw the old woman again.

"Oh! what is to become of me?—what is to become of me?" she cried from afar off, lifting her eyes and arms to heaven.

"You know perfectly well what is to become of you," I said in reply.

In April, a week before the term of the year, this woman, seeing me pass in a deserted street, threw herself on her knees, asking me for my help.

"Are you happy now?" I asked her.

The eve of the famous day when her "happiness" was to come to an end, I saw her kneeling before the door of my house. "You have forgotten the conditions—go back now into poverty. In any case you are physically much stronger, and if the worst comes to the worst, do not forget to try the tub of Diogenes, on the Lido."

I never heard any more of the old woman. The palace that she lived in has now been demolished, and where it stood the painter Tito built his house.

At the beginning of my connection with the Directors of the Fine Arts Society there were several occasions on which we were not agreed as to the prices of the water-colours I sent them. Sometimes they thought my prices too high; sometimes too low. As they did not themselves buy my water-colours, but only took them on commission with a profit of 25 per cent. on the sales, the Society did not like me to ask too small a sum for my paintings, whereas I thought that it was often wise, so as to accelerate their sale. But an unexpected circumstance put an end to this divergence of opinion, and the prices I fixed became final, the Society no longer protesting in any way. I owed this new condition of things to an oil painting which I had made from nature, meaning to copy it afterwards in water-colour without spoiling the paper

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by several first essays, which in oil do not leave any traces, whereas in water-colour this cannot be done without spoiling the freshness and spontaneity of the picture.

In Venice I never let people come into my studio; nobody except my wife was allowed to enter the room where I worked. One day, however, to my great astonishment I saw an Englishman—Mr. Maclean, the great London picture-dealer whom I knew by sight—come in. While I was scolding the servant who had opened the door, the Englishman, without paying the slightest attention to my remarks, went up to the picture.

"How much?" he said, pointing at it with his finger.

"Nothing," I answered. "I am not selling it."

"How much?" he repeated, with the same voice and gesture.

"Nothing, because I am going to make a copy in water-colour which will be worth five hundred pounds."

The Englishman took £500 out of his pocket and offered them to me, adding, "I want the oil, and not the water-colour."

"The oil painting will not be sold until after the sale of the water-colour," I said, "and *that* I must first show to the Fine Arts Society, with whom I have constant dealings."

The merchant frowned, and without saying a word more left the room.

Three weeks later I was in London and showed my two pictures to the Directors of the Fine Arts Society. "We have heard about your oil painting, and that is the one we want to have," said the Director, Mr. Huish.

"Gentlemen, you will not have it unless you buy the water-colour, which I will give to you for four hundred and fifty. Nobody will make you a water-colour like that; many people could make you a much better oil picture. If we are going to have serious dealings together, we ought to know each other. I have never painted in oils and that picture has faults which you do not see, but that any painter would notice at once."

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A discussion ensued which went on from five to seven o'clock, almost an unknown thing in London, where business is transacted in a few minutes or not done at all. At seven o'clock my arguments convinced them, and the water-colour was bought. The next day they sold it for 550 guineas.

The Society was naturally delighted. "Now, gentlemen," I said, "I will give you the oil painting. Send it to the Academy and keep 25 per cent. of the price that you will receive for it."

Two months later I received a letter from the Fine Arts Society, telling me that the oil painting, which had been sent to the Academy, had not been admitted.

"Well, how much will you give me now for the picture?" I replied.

The answer was £150, instead of £500.

"I hope, gentlemen," I wrote to the Society a few days later, "that we shall never have any further discussions on the value of a picture, whether the picture is painted by myself or another artist. But instead of sending me the oil painting here, send it back to me at Berlin, addressed c/o Poste Restante, and when I go back to Russia I will take the picture and give it to a friend."

Two weeks later, when at Berlin, I went to the Post Office. "Have you a picture for Roussoff?"

"All the pictures are at the Academy. The Exhibition opens to-morrow," replied the clerk.

"It is impossible, because I did not send the necessary documents for presenting a picture."

"God in heaven! If you think that I have time to verify all the documents, you make a great mistake. All the pictures that arrive are sent straight to the Academy. Go there, and you will find yours."

At the Exhibition I was told that a picture by Roussoff had been accepted and was already hung. On my questioning them as to how such a thing could have happened, they began: "God in heaven——!"—the same answer as the Post Office made.

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"Well, gentlemen, I am very sorry indeed to give you the trouble, but I must have this picture, because I am taking it with me to Russia."

"In the name of heaven——! But, my dear man, do come with us, you will see your picture. There it is on the line; you know what that means."

And in truth I found my picture hanging in the best place in the room.

"Do, for heaven's sake, leave the picture where it is —for, if not, we shall have to rehang all the pictures in the room."

So I left my picture at the Exhibition, and went to find a shop in Unter den Linden to tell them that they might sell this work, which they had so amiably received in Berlin, at any price they liked, and to the first person who wanted to have it.

Two weeks later it was sold for 5,000 marks, without counting the profit to the merchant.

Contrary to my habit of sending my water-colours only to the Fine Arts Society, I forwarded one in 1886 to the Royal Academy. It was accepted and very well placed. The same year the *Pall Mall Gazette* conceived the original idea of asking the English public to vote on certain questions which had to do with the pictures exhibited. The questions, twelve in number, were as follows:

(1) Which is the best picture of all?
(2) „ „ „ classical picture?
(3) „ „ „ historical picture?
(4) „ „ „ religious picture?
(5) „ „ „ landscape?
(6) „ „ „ seascape?
(7) „ „ „ animal picture?
(8) „ „ „ portrait?
(9) „ „ „ family picture?
(10) „ „ „ water-colour?
(11) „ „ „ picture of the prettiest baby?
(12) „ „ worst picture of all?

The paper offered a prize of £20 to the person who voted nearest to the most popular numbers. On the 16th of

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August the *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote: "We are glad to announce to you this morning the result of our competition on the Academy pictures. The votes were very numerous —about four thousand—and several of the people who voted took the trouble to go to the Academy several times, armed with pencil and paper. . . ." After having given the list of the twelve questions asked with the majority of votes, the *Gazette* declared that nobody had won on all the questions asked, but that a certain Stanley Young would receive the £20 as he was nearest, with ten out of twelve.

I was astonished to see that my water-colour "Angioletto" was declared the best water-colour. It received 194 votes, whereas the next one on the list only had 88 votes.

What is admirable in England is the absence of all national bias in the appreciation of works of art.

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CHAPTER XVI

One day when I was in the cathedral at Chioggia, I found some ideas which were just what I wanted to form the background of a dramatic subject that I thought of painting. It was a work that would take at least a month, so I had to make arrangements for living in this little fishing-town. The hotel was very bad and very dear, so I determined to go for a walk in the bigger streets and try to find, amongst the women who were looking out of the windows, someone from whom I could ask hospitality and a good room for a month. I soon found what I required—a family consisting of an old mother, and some young girls—and there I spent a very happy month.

The day after my installation I went to the church about ten o'clock with my easel, paper, and colours. At eleven o'clock a dozen priests came in, of whom about eight or nine, being Canons, wore red stockings. (At Venice, because of jeers of little boys, people said, the Canons no longer wore them.) The priests passed in front of me and went and sat in the choir stalls to sing.

Anyone who wished could come in, as the folding doors of the church were only separated from the road by a curtain. The congregation consisted of very few people, and these people sat behind me on the benches in order to watch my painting. I was in the way of the priests, and they bowed very amiably to me each time they passed, but not until four or five days had gone by did some of them stop a moment so as to look at my picture. Their tact, and the care which they took to pass without worrying me, were quite touching—they even thought it necessary to express their regret at bothering me when they wanted to pass; but I replied that, on the contrary, it was I who ought to apologise.

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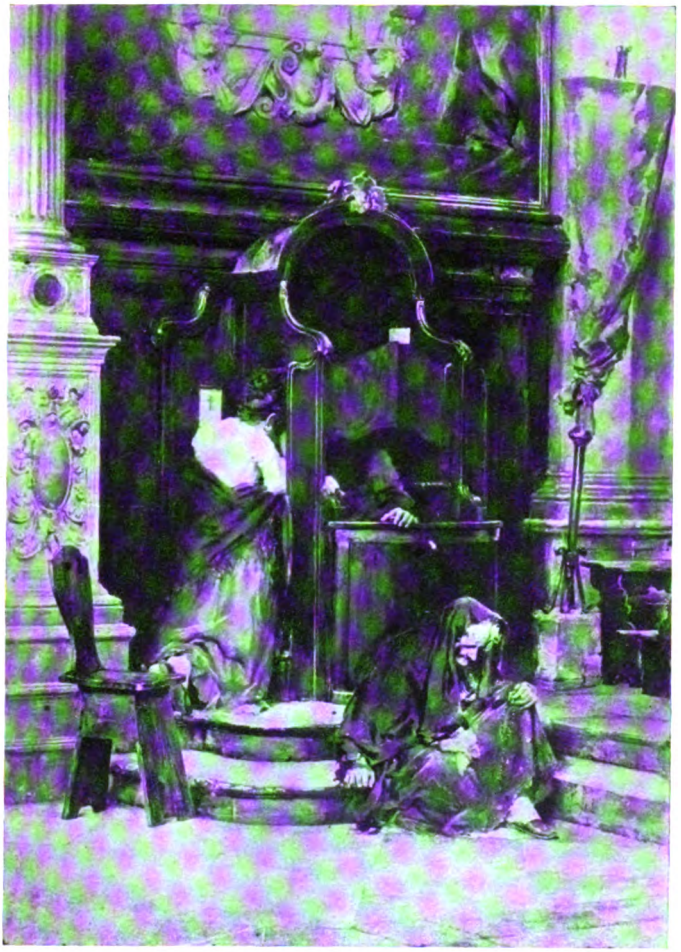

THE CONFESSIONAL, VENICE

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This exchange of courtesies between an intruder like myself and the representatives of law and order was interesting, because it showed how full these men were of the feeling of courtesy which is so general in Italy in all classes.

After the services, some of the priests went into the sacristy, whence they could see the confessionals placed in different parts of the church. When a priest saw a person waiting in front of his particular confessional, he went straight up to her and confessed her. Just opposite me there was a confessional where I often saw women kneeling, waiting for the priest, who would then come out of the sacristy and gravely walk across the church; but before going in to the confessional, he would turn towards me and bow from afar off. One day, after a confession, the priest came straight to me. "What confessions—what confessions, you must hear, sir," I said. "They must be interesting."

"Always the same," he said, smiling.

The water-colour which I did at Chioggia is to-day in the National Gallery at Sydney.

After having paid an affectionate farewell to the women who had looked after me so well and kindly, and for such a modest remuneration, I went back to Venice, where I began to work again all day and to spend my evenings in society.

During the twenty years that my work in the churches obliged me to have relations with priests, I have only praise for their amiability. They were generally quite simple men, both intelligent and anxious to instruct themselves. Nothing was more remarkable in those days than the confidence with which painters were treated. They were shut up in the churches from midday until five o'clock, and during that time they were absolute masters, except in the church of the Frari, where the guardians stayed throughout the afternoon waiting for tourists and their tips. In all the other churches the guardians went off and shut the doors with a double lock. I wish I were

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a poet to be able to describe one's feelings when left alone within those old walls, which during untold centuries have been silent witnesses of joyous and poignant scenes of human life. Thanks to the absence of carriages in the streets of Venice, I do not think that in any country there are churches where the silence is so complete and impressive. Nowhere else can a painter find more favourable opportunities for his work, absolute absence of noise and of people who come in and out and annoy by their presence, and the delight of finding one's subject each day under the same conditions and under the same aspects of light and shade.

Sometimes, however, I had surprises even in church. One day I was shut up in the church of St. Mark and thought myself alone, when suddenly I saw the Countess Olga Mocenigo come from behind one of the many columns there. She nearly frightened me.

"Countess, how on earth did you get here?"

"When Mass was over, I stayed to confess to the Patriarch," she said. And I then saw the latter, crowned by his red cap, walking towards the corridor which connected the church to his own dwelling.

I kissed the Countess's hand, and she went out at a door where a verger was waiting for her.

On another occasion a priest astonished me by his presence of mind. I had been shut up for about two hours, when suddenly I heard the noise of a door opening out of the sacristy. After a few minutes a priest came into the church without having noticed me, as I was hidden behind a column. His irregular steps and his feverish gestures immediately attracted my attention, and I watched him. He seemed terribly agitated—one would have said, a man who was a prey to remorse for some horrible crime. Tall and handsome, he stopped in front of a column and leant his head against the cold marble. Then he blindly made a few steps until his hand touched a bench, in front of which he stood motionless, with his head bowed. I was frightfully sorry for this man, and the

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idea of the shock that he would receive if he found that someone was a witness of his tragic gestures made me want to let him know that I was there. So I coughed very loudly behind my column. The effect was magical: in a second the man was transformed. He drew a little book from his pocket, making movements calculated to show the immense impression his reading produced on him, and came towards me, without checking his literary enthusiasm, until he was two steps from me. We then began to talk together in a friendly way.

At Ravenna I was painting a picture showing the interior of a sacristy, with the idea of introducing a priest, sitting with his back to me, giving a singing lesson to a choirboy as a subject. A flesh-and-blood priest who came occasionally to watch my painting promised to get me a model. "I will send you," he said, "the prettiest and best behaved of all my choirboys," and truly I could only praise my little model of nine years of age, who had to stand with his mouth open in the pose of a child singing. Every now and then I let him sit down, and then we talked.

"What are you going to become when you are grown-up?" I asked him one day.

"I want to be a priest," he replied.

"Why?"

"Because they eat capons," he replied with conviction.

This reply made me laugh very much, but I did not think it necessary to repeat it to the good priest.

The only time I met an ecclesiastic who had modern ideas, which were not very respectful towards his superiors, was in the church of the Frari. One day when I had gone there to paint, I saw a priest sitting at a table covered with copper money, of which he was making little heaps. Neither his face nor his manner of speaking was Venetian. His cheeks, although carefully shaved, betrayed by their blue tint that he was a Neapolitan. It was evidently the money in the church boxes that he was dividing between the servants of the church, who had a right to this.

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Before going to my place, I went over to the priest, saluted him, and said, "What do you think of the new Patriarch who has just been enthroned in Venice?"

"What do I think of him?" he replied. "But I do not think of him at all, because I do not know him. I am going to see him to-day and then I shall see how things will turn out" ("come che butta").

This phrase seemed to please him, because he continued to repeat it all the time he was arranging his little heaps of money.

I then went back to my place, which was some way off. After half an hour he got up, bowed to me from afar off and went towards the chief door; but before he reached it, he turned and said to me at least three times, smilingly, "We will see how things will turn out."

One day when I was walking in Monselice, a little town near Padua, I was struck by the appearance of the windows of a certain house. It was on the ground-floor, and the window-frames, wide open, were entirely hidden by a quantity of materials, clothes, and other odds and ends hung there. A discreet look into the inside of the rooms showed me quantities of furniture, vases, busts, arms, etc. Thinking that I was at the door of an antiquity shop, I rang. An old priest received me; he was small, bright-eyed, and smiling, and explained to me that he had a passion for old things, but that he did not sell them. He took me through four or five rooms simply crammed with a heterogeneous collection—from pictures to lace, from engravings to carpets. Then he opened the drawers of his chests and showed me quantities of magnificent embroidered costumes of the time of Goldoni.

However, amongst these things he had a lot of rubbish, which showed me that, as a collector, he had not much knowledge.

"This collection is well known," he said proudly. "Here is a book in which people who have done me the honour of coming to see me have written their names. Here is the signature of Queen Victoria."

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"What are you going to do with your museum?" I asked. "Have you any heirs?"

"I shall leave it to the town of Padua," he replied.

Then he drew from a cupboard a little case, and asked me if I cared for Petrarch. I admitted that unfortunately I did not know his writings well, but that I admired him, whereupon, opening the little box, he said to me very solemnly, "Touch this vertebra with your finger"—which I did, bending my head as I did so.

Back at the station I met some people who explained to me that most of the beautiful things in the collection of the priest came from the Duke of Parma, whose castle was at Battaglia, quite close to Monselice. They were presented by the Duke to the excellent priest, who, to augment his collection, worried people in every way. It was said that even at the moment when he was confessing a dying man he would look round the room and see whether he could not find something worth carrying off, and then he asked the patient, who generally gave it to him.

This excellent priest died in 1887, and his collection was put in the Museum at Padua.

Princess Metternich wrote to me one day, asking me to come in that evening, as a remarkable musician, Countess Erdödi, had promised to play the piano. When I arrived there, from afar off I heard very odd sounds—sometimes it was Wagner's music and sometimes it was *Madame Angot*; sometimes it was a waltz or sometimes music I did not know.

I went upstairs, but scarcely had I opened the door of the drawing-room when Princess Metternich met me and made me sit two steps from the piano, behind the pianist, while she sat down beside me. I saw a tall, beautiful lady with great beautiful hands covered with turquoises and other precious stones, and I noticed the extreme ease and the stupefying audacity with which her hands flew over the piano, passing from one theme to another.

The anxious looks of the Princess proved that she

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realised the effect produced on me by this sort of music, but she forced me to remain where I was by making little frowning signs to me from time to time.

The drawing-room was very big, and a dozen ladies seated near the walls made three or four separate groups. As the piano was quite near the door by which I entered, I could not even bow to these ladies, and stayed in my place held down by the Princess. Never before had I seen such a performance taken seriously, nor could I have imagined that there was anyone in the world capable of believing that this musical hotch-potch would interest any set of people who were in the slightest degree cultivated.

When the misery imposed upon us all had gone on for an hour, I felt I really could not bear it any more. The Princess herself stopped frowning at me, so I decided to get up, and went over to the first group of ladies who were sitting against the wall, then to the second, then to the third, and at last to the fourth, where I sat down on a sofa already occupied by one of the ladies. They were all quite silent under the influence of this curious musical phenomenon. But scarcely had I sat down when the Countess Erdödi rose, left her piano, and came straight to me, to sit down on the same sofa. Nobody thanked her, nobody said anything polite, nobody made any comment—but everyone seemed to be waiting until someone had the courage to say something. I do not know what devil made me break the silence by the question:

"Countess, do you like music?"

My neighbours struggled not to laugh; Countess Erdödi made a gesture of impatience, but did not reply.

"Countess, in saying 'music' I was thinking of the music of other people. The question I ask you is very simple. You pass with great facility from one piece to another, playing each for only two or three minutes, therefore how can I know whether you like the whole of the work of these musicians!"

Countess Erdödi did not deign to reply, and we spoke of

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other things. But the next day I went at eleven o'clock in the morning to Princess Metternich, to reproach her for the way she had treated me and the suffering she had made me go through. We had talked together for half an hour, when all of a sudden the door of the drawing-room opened and in came the Countess. She did not bow to me, or take any notice of my presence, and only spoke to the Princess. They talked for a little time and then the Countess got up. I also rose, went up to her, and offered her my arm. An instant of visible astonishment—then she took my arm and I conducted her to her gondola. "Come and see me," she said, giving me the address of her hotel—but I never saw her again.

Madame Pinelli, *née* von Treska, who was divorced from her husband, was often the guest of Princess Hatzfeldt and interested herself in literature. One day she told me that a German paper had asked her to write something about Duse, who was just then beginning to become celebrated. Madame Pinelli begged me to come and help her to get a place in the theatre at Padua, where the celebrated actress was going to play in two pieces. Although they wrote to me from Padua that there were no more seats, I suggested to Madame Pinelli that we should go on the chance.

When we arrived at the entrance of the theatre, where people were already assembled, I asked the employees who were there to issue tickets, to let it be known that a person was there who would pay ten times the value of a stall—and we waited in the crowd. Nobody in the crowd replied to this offer, but it aroused astonishment. At last a very polite gentleman suddenly came to me and asked me the reason of this extraordinary request.

"Here is a lady," I said, pointing out Madame Pinelli, "whom a German paper has asked to write an article on Duse. Madame is interested in literature, and I should be very much obliged if you could possibly find her a place—it does not matter where or at what price."

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The gentleman answered, addressing Madame Pinelli, "Will you accept a seat in our box? It is the stage box belonging to the proprietor?"

He then gave her his arm to take her through the crowd, and disappeared with her. I did not see any chance of a seat for myself and waited in the entrance-hall, which by this time had become empty, the only person who remained being a fat gentleman who was sitting against the wall. I sat next to him, and soon a little conversation began between us.

"You have not got a place, then?" I asked.

"Yes, yes, I have a place—we have even got a box."

"But then——?"

"I am waiting for my family, who are in the theatre."

"But what are you doing here by yourself?"

"I am afraid of theatres catching fire, and that is why I prefer sitting outside; but my family are not afraid, and I shall wait here until the end of the piece."

At this moment I saw an individual coming out, carrying under his arm a case, the shape of which suggested a cornet-à-pistons. I stopped the gentleman in the passage. "You belong to the orchestra, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Would you mind very much if I took your place during the acts? In the *entr'actes*, when the curtain goes down, I will give it up to you, and will pay you the price of a stall."

"Certainly. You will easily find my chair. It is the third one on the left as you go in."

And that was how I saw Duse for the first time. *Francillon*, of Dumas fils, was the piece played.

When it was over, I called for Madame Pinelli at the entrance of the theatre, and before night we were back at Venice. Naturally during our journey we talked of nothing but Duse. Admirable in her absolute absence of artificiality, she did not act, but really lived, thought, and suffered. As for her outward appearance, without being beautiful, she was unique. Madame Pinelli and I

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were so much of the same opinion that if our journey had been longer we should both have found it necessary to keep silence.

Princess Metternich asked me one day, "What do you understand by 'great art'?"

"It is that art," I replied, "the aim of which is to create beauty, and beauty more wonderful than nature can produce. Under the ægis of certain Greek philosophers, especially of Proclus, some people arrived at the conclusion that as nature never creates a perfect thing, it remains for man to combine individual parts to make a whole representing ideal beauty. Thus the head of one would be taken, the arm of another, the legs of a third —and it is thus that the Greeks created their statues. It was not considered enough that a statue should just resemble any man. But these philosophers forgot that it is man who decides whether the combinations are successful or not, and that to decide this question man can only base his estimate on his own taste. The other nations—taking their cue from the Greek philosophers—have forgotten that the ideal of these latter only applies to one race of men, the Greek race.

"The Belvedere Apollo seems to me heavy, coarse, and clumsy in comparison with people belonging to certain races of the Caucasus, whose life is spent practically on horseback. These men have broader shoulders, smaller waists, smaller feet—conditions which create an entirely different ideal of beauty from that of the Belvedere Apollo. Unfortunately the only statues that have represented the most beautiful types of humanity up to now are Greek statues. No one has paid serious attention to the other races."

"I do not like the face of Apollo," said the Princess. "I cannot admit that in the whole of humanity there is no face more beautiful."

"That is a question of taste," I replied. "Personally, I do not like his feet—they seem to me too big; but I

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can understand very well how Winckelmann, who lived in Bavaria, where the men have no necks, enormous stomachs, and thick calves, was wild with admiration at the sight of Apollo.

"I do not know whether there is a country where one human being is endowed with all the beautiful parts of the human body as we find them separately in different countries. What are the neck and breasts of a Greek woman in comparison to those one sees in Egypt? What are the hands of Greek statues in comparison with the hands that one finds in women of the world in Europe? What are their feet in comparison with *yours*, Princess, in front of which I am ready to bow myself on my knees?" And in saying that I knelt down. "If you will keep your foot for five minutes on that footstool, I will kiss it," I said; and having done so before she had time to take it away, I took off her shoe. And now, if you want to make me happy, give me a present of the shoe and I will keep it all my life as a relic."

The Princess laughed and shook her finger at me.

We were young then. When I heard four years ago that she had passed her eightieth year, I was photographed next to the pretty box in which I kept her shoe, and this is what I wrote to her:

"Dear and excellent Princess,

"This shoe, which more than forty years ago I had the courage to carry off, and which reminds me of the incredible beauty of the smallest foot the world has ever seen, never ceases to awaken the admiration of all those who have had the privilege of seeing it. Becoming, as I grow old, more and more sensitive to the beauties that nature is gracious enough to bestow on us from time to time, my sentiments of gratitude towards her go on increasing each time that I look at the pretty case in which this marvellous creation lies. The photograph that I am sending to you, dear Princess, proves that, in spite of the horrors of every kind that Europe has passed through, the little shoe is still very well. The box in which it is placed serves for its sarcophagus, and after me it will be entailed on the heads

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of the family, who will have the duty of guarding this relic. The Bolsheviks have confiscated my beautiful property that I inherited from my uncle at the beginning of this century; they have destroyed and ruined everything; but I am well and am still rich, because I have my house at Venice and your shoe. Allow me to kiss your hands, dear Princess, with all the depths of affection and admiration which a heart of eighty years still loves to feel.

"WOLKOFF-MOUROMTZOFF."

The Hôtel Britannia was the most fashionable hotel of Venice in those days. Three foreigners who were friends of mine lived there, viz. Prince François Liechtenstein, Prince Tchetvertinsky, and Count Lambsdorff. Prince Liechtenstein had rooms on the ground-floor, Prince Tchetvertinsky was on the floor half-way up, and Lambsdorff on the first floor. They were young bachelors who went out a great deal but had nothing in common. The first, a brother of the reigning Prince, was a handsome young man in spite of being too tall. Sometimes, as a joke, he would come into Madame de Pilat's drawing-room on his hands and knees. The second, whom all the town called "Tchett," was a Russian, but was not like a Russian, unless one might say that he resembled a Caucasian. He was a great friend of Princess Metternich and only to be seen at her house. The third had a weak chest and had long ago been given up by all the doctors, but persisted in living. He was very intelligent, very accomplished, with very aristocratic convictions, and had lived in this hotel for several years, having the best room, with a beautiful balcony and a splendid view. He was a great landowner in Kurland, and managed all his affairs by careful correspondence with his agent. He wrote one day in my presence two letters which made me laugh very much, but of which I can only remember the subject. In one of these letters he ordered his agent not to allow the peasants to follow his coffin. "They have a passion for brawling," he said, "and I really do not want my body to give them the chance." He ordered the priest of his parish not to

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make a discourse over his grave, nor to speak of him, because, as he said, he could no longer protest if he did not agree with him.

One day the director of the hotel, a man named Walter, went to him scarcely daring to tell him, after much circumlocution, that the lodging he occupied had been promised for a long time to a family from Hamburg. This family was to arrive in a week.

One could imagine the fury of Lambsdorff. "What! —he who had been in the same lodging every year when he came to Venice—he was to be kicked out for a rich family from Hamburg, probably a rich merchant who had offered more than he paid!—he——!"

Walter simply bolted, and told everyone that the only reply Lambsdorff had deigned to make was a gesture as if he were hunting for his revolver! Not knowing what to do, Walter told his people not to give the Count anything more to eat.

Having heard this, several ladies amused themselves by feeding Lambsdorff. The Duchess Noce and her sister, Amelie Mocenigo, brought him his meals in their gondola, which would stop under the balcony. Then Lambsdorff would throw the ladies a rope to which they tied their basket, and, full of provisions, it was drawn up to the first floor. Walter could not hinder this proceeding, which made everyone in the town roar with laughter for a few days. On the third day he went to Lambsdorff to tell him that the story of the family from Hamburg was not true, but that he had been obliged to invent it in order not to divulge the secret of the arrival of the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia; that the apartment of Lambsdorff was the best in the hotel and he had nothing better to offer to the Grand Duke. On hearing this, my friend, who was the most Russian of all the nobles of the Baltic provinces I ever knew, after "giving a wigging" to Walter for not having told him the truth at once, immediately left and went to the Hôtel Danieli.

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CHAPTER XVII

In 1885 I decided to make a voyage to Constantinople, to vary the subjects of my water-colours a little. Nélidoff was still Ambassador there, and I had known Madame Nélidoff a long time. My wife and I took the Oriental Express to Varna on the Black Sea, and from there we went in a steamboat to Constantinople.

In order to avoid putting up at horrible hotels, I left my wife on the boat and went to look for a lodging in the famous Pera. I soon found a very comfortable apartment which one of the staff of the German Ambassador had just left, in the house of a Greek family, and there we lived for more than two months, quite comfortable and well fed.

Constantinople had few picturesque corners and there were a great many difficulties for painters. The Turks do not like people copying any place on which there are inscriptions, and they are very rude and familiar in the more secluded streets. Nélidoff at once asked me whether I would not like (as a sort of bodyguard or policeman) some of the kawasses of the Embassy; but having ascertained one day the effect that their presence produced, I preferred to do without them. An English lady who was painting had two kawasses with her, and the consequence was that all around there was a mob of onlookers, who not only surrounded her but obstructed the view. The kawasses constantly had to ask them to move away so that the lady could see what she wanted to paint.

I immediately started on an old and extremely picturesque fountain, but to see it in shadow I had to be there at five o'clock in the morning. A servant brought my easel and my palette—and as the water-colour was big I painted standing, almost leaning against the wall. At

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eight o'clock the sun came out and I had to leave. On my left there was a Bulgarian café, which opened early, and a number of the porters—so well known at Constantinople —great big men, with naked legs, passed every morning by this street. The first day they stopped to look at me carelessly and went on, but soon, noticing that I came every day to the same spot, some of them became aggressive and finished by nearly putting their fists in my face. They came together so close behind me that they often touched me with their clothes and I felt their breath on my neck. One day I thought it was better to show them that I was not afraid of them, so I moved backwards as if I was admiring my picture, without paying the slightest attention to the feet I was treading on. The serious way in which I acted prevented them from protest; they merely cried out, rubbed their feet, and then went away without saying anything. I did the same thing next day and four or five times afterwards. After this, noting my habit of looking at my work from afar off, nobody came and bothered me any more.

One day I was painting in a small, rather isolated street. I had scarcely started to work when about forty boys of from nine to twelve years of age, coming from school, attacked me. They threw quantities of dry leaves at me, which naturally did not do any harm but prevented me working and dirtied my colours, so I was obliged to get up and go.

Once, however, I had an agreeable surprise. Wishing to get a more extended view, I went up a little street which was only about a metre in width and ended in a shut door. I sat down in front of this and began to paint. Scarcely an hour had passed when the door was opened and the most exquisite little Turkish girl of from ten to twelve appeared, offering me a tray on which there was a cup of coffee. Her expression and her ways were so "fine" and so *comme il faut*, I might almost say, that I never forgot the child. I took the cup, drank the coffee, and offered her a franc, but she refused to take it

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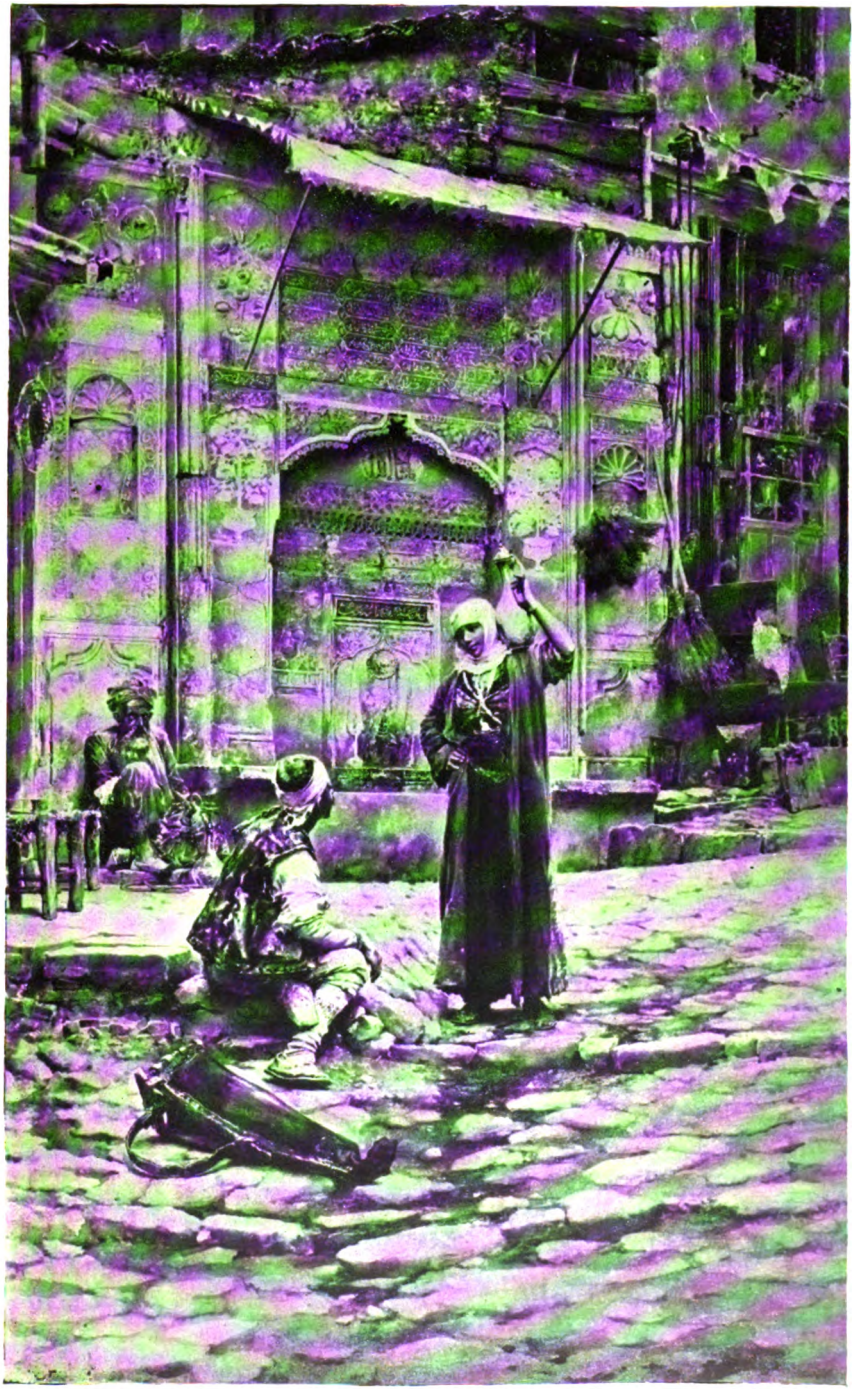

A PICTURESQUE FOUNTAIN IN CONSTANTINOPLE

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—when suddenly from the interior of the court I heard a number of women's voices screaming, "Baksheesh—baksheesh!" Then the little girl took the franc and went back, shutting the door. But who had sent me the coffee or who had seen me working in front of the door I never knew.

One day we were asked to take part, with a dozen other people, and accompanied by a Turkish officer in uniform, in an expedition in a caïque, to visit different palaces of the Sultan. All these palaces resembled each other in their bad taste, and the only interesting note of our journey consisted in the coffee which they gave us at one of these palaces. Those who have never drunk this coffee have no notion of what coffee can be. They gave us, in quite tiny cups, a clear yellowish liquid with a perfume which would have been enough to give a taste of coffee to I do not know how many cups of milk. Nélidoff told me that he had done everything he could to get some of this coffee for himself, but the Sultan is the only proprietor and does not wish anyone else to have it.

I went into the palace and saw a corridor full of pictures by Aivasovsky, the celebrated Russian painter, who made hundreds of thousands of roubles by selling his pictures to one of the Sultans. Some of them, however, were completely spoilt by the Prussian blue which he used without stint, and which in course of time disintegrated and ruined all the other colours.

But the most curious part of our excursion was reserved for the last, when they presented a bill for the said outing, which came to nearly 100 francs each!

Before leaving Constantinople, I wanted to paint the interior of a beautiful mosque, not an easy thing to do because there are mosques where entry is forbidden to Christians. However, I managed to get permission to work in one of the most celebrated ones. I sent my easel, my chair, and my palette there, so as to start immediately on a picture which would take two or three weeks of work. From the first day I saw that the time I spent in this

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mosque would not be pleasant. My hat, which I left with my boots at the entry, was constantly spat upon, although the Turks knew that I was paying 5 francs a day to the servant who was supposed to be looking after the mosque, and it took twenty minutes to wash the hat in one of the beautiful fountains which, thank heaven, were everywhere.

The next day I put my hat nearer to me, but the faces of the "faithful" were not very reassuring, especially as we were in Ramadan, the time when the fanatical Turk suffers most from nerves, and during which the mosques are repaired and embellished.

One day a man came up to me, and pointing to the colour of cadmium yellow in my colour box, made me understand that I ought to repaint the inscription on the entry of their pulpit, where there were still vestiges of an ancient gilding.

"No," I replied, by signs, "not that colour. It must be altoune"—the only Turkish word I know which means "gold."

When I got back, I found Nélidoff there, who had come to ask us to go in the Russian ship which was always in the Bosphorus, to stay at the Island of the Princes for three days.

We started early in the morning, with the Ambassador, his wife, and some secretaries. I told Nélidoff of the conversation that I had had about the "altoune," and he strongly advised me to have the gilt inscription done by a very clever French workman whose address he gave me. Thanks to the courtesy of the staff of the boat, who promised to take the commission to him at once, the workman got the order the same day.

I do not remember much about our time at the Island of the Princes, except a visit to the house of Bulwer Lytton, which was shown to the public. All the rooms, from the drawing-room to the bedrooms, were nothing but libraries, lined with beautifully bound books. I was so much struck by the quantity of books

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lying there, that, passing a work in several volumes with the title "Theories on the Impossible," I thought I would examine it more closely. What was my astonishment when I discovered that there was no way of taking it out of the shelves but by a great effort —and then there was nothing left in my hands but a piece of wood covered with paper and an inscription in gilt!

All these books were dummies, covered with paper in different colours and inscribed in gilt letters! They were of every kind—in folio, quarto, and octavo, and with the most varied titles.

One alcove in the bedroom contained—arranged round the bed—a whole library of little books whose titles had something to do with sleep, dreams, reveries, nightmares, etc.

I need not say that I kept the "dummy" which I had pulled out, thus committing a theft, with retention of the stolen goods.

When I returned to Constantinople, after three days, I went straight to the mosque, and while I was taking off my shoes at the entry, the Turks who happened to be there bowed amiably to me, saying the word "Altoune." One of them took my easel, which he carried to the place I had occupied before; another the chair and palette. Directly I came in, from all sides the Turks bowed to me, saying different things, amongst which I always heard the magic word "Altoune." In fact the inscription was handsomely gilded; and I owed to this work—which cost me 20 francs—the change in my relations with the faithful of the mosque.

The Secretary of the French Embassy, M. Jarochinsky, a charming man whose acquaintance I had made at the Nélidoffs', asked me one day to go to a soirée vénitienne Hilmin Pacha's wife was giving at her villa in the suburbs of Constantinople.

We went in the French gunboat and started that evening. We had dinner in the garden, which was illuminated with Venetian lanterns. Several ladies, amongst whom

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was an Egyptian Princess, were present, but no men except the Frenchmen and myself. The mistress of the house, a woman of thirty-five, speaking perfect French, did the honours very charmingly. Sitting between Jarochinsky and myself, she spoke very frankly of her misfortunes.

"That man distresses me—I feel that he no longer loves me," she said, pointing out Jarochinsky and without the slightest shyness. To judge by the reply of that gentleman and his manner, it was easy to see that she was not far wrong.

"Forget him, madame," I advised; "he really is not worth your affection."

"Yes, you are right," she replied; "but unfortunately I cannot forget him."

Jarochinsky heard and smiled. I must admit that I was sorry for this charming woman.

When we came back into the apartments I admired a splendid carpet, with a white ground, red in the corners, and ornamented with yellow lions. Pretty young women, who were supposed to be Circassians, brought us coffee; they wore gauze dresses of different colours.

The mistress of the house wanted me to see her daughters, and when she heard that I was a musician, she insisted that I should hear one of them play the piano. Two charming girls of eleven and thirteen came and stood before me. They had pretty pale faces with dark brown eyes, in which the iris could not be distinguished from the pupil. They came up to me without any fuss whatever, and I had time to ask them quietly whether the idea of living in a harem did not seem horrible to them. They replied that they hoped not to be forced to do it. One of them went to the piano and played Schumann's "Rêveries," after which her mother came up to me with her and asked me what I thought of her playing.

"You play very prettily, mademoiselle," I replied; "but I should say it was an English governess who gave you your music lessons."

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"Why?" asked the mother, laughing.

"Because you put a little too much feeling into your playing, as Englishwomen do. They exaggerate the effects they want to produce in music very often."

The little girl laughed very much, because, as it happened, her governess was an Englishwoman.

It was a Monsieur Trybert—Secretary, I think, at the Embassy—who then sat down to the piano, playing with energy and extreme brilliance, in fact it seemed as if he were trying to smash it. His playing consisted of a succession of runs which never terminated; I thought of the two young girls who were listening and who were probably incapable of judging of the value or non-value of this production.

We went back to Constantinople under the light of a splendid moon.

A few days later, having said good-bye to the Nélidoffs and our other friends, we started for home, and after a rather tiring journey arrived there, feeling that, in spite of the beauties of Constantinople, it was not to be compared to Venice. It has always astonished me that I have never met any travellers who realise the enormous difference that the two cities present in their general aspect. At Constantinople the water has a grey surface in which nothing is reflected, neither the houses nor the outline of the town, nor the minarets, etc. A horizontal line divides every landscape into two parts in which neither the form nor colour of the upper has anything in common with the objects in the lower half. The current of the water is so strong that it keeps the surface in movement and prevents any settled reflection to form, whereas the beauty of Venice depends entirely on the intimate relations which exist between the town and the water, and these reflections make the aspect of Venice unique. Unfortunately since the introduction of steamboats, and above all of the "lancie," which create a wash in the canals on every side, this characteristic beauty of Venice is very much diminished.

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CHAPTER XVIII

One day at seven o'clock in the morning I received a letter from my dear Madame Sophie Volodkovitch, telling me that she had come to Venice in the company of her husband and her sister, Countess Strogonoff, *née* Countess Potocka, and begging me to come as quickly as possible to the hotel where they were staying.

Madame Volodkovitch was an illegitimate daughter of Countess Boleslas Potocka, who, when she was dying, confessed to her husband that she had a daughter in France and had left her there in safe keeping. Count Potocky, a man of wonderful kindness, fetched the child back to his house and brought her up with his own girl, but did not give her his name. The little girl remained "Miss Sophie" until the day when she married Volodkovitch, but she was always on the best of terms with Count Potocky and her sister Countess Strogonoff. Without being beautiful, Madame Volodkovitch had the attributes which, taken together, often give to Poles very great seductiveness. Thanks to a wonderful subtleness of mind, she expressed in her features every shadow that her words or those of her interlocutor called forth, which made him believe that she took an immense interest in his conversation. In addition, she had a delicious voice, a charming smile, and a delightfully fresh laugh which showed two splendid rows of teeth.

I hurried to the hotel, and at the door of her room Madame Volodkovitch seized me by the hand, and, dragging me into the next apartment, pointed to an elegant lady lying on the ground with her eyes shut and scarcely breathing.

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"Look!" she said, "she has poisoned herself with laudanum. Here is the bottle. For mercy's sake get me a doctor quietly, so that there shall not be any fuss in the hotel."

After rushing round to all sorts of doctors—who are never to be found when wanted—by nine o'clock I could only find one, and he was a surgeon, knowing, from his own admission, very little about poisoning cases. Directly he saw the Countess he declared that it was too late for a stomach pump, and that there was nothing to be done but to prevent her going to sleep, by making her drink strong coffee.

I lifted up the poor woman, put her on the sofa, and sat down in front of her on a chair. I held her wrists and every three minutes I shook her so hard that she awoke, opened her eyes a second, then again went to sleep. Things went on like this until midday, when I saw that she was getting worse, and the Volodkovitchs—husband and wife—who were anxiously watching, realised this too. It then occurred to me to give the poor woman a few minutes of repose, but I had scarcely had time to tell my friends what I was going to do, when the situation completely changed. Her head fell back, her lips were blue, her body stiff, and she looked like a corpse. I was so certain that she was dead that I took her up by her waist, gave her an awful shake, and let her fall on her right side. She remained motionless. I then took her up again and let her fall on the left side, with the same result. For my conscience' sake—although convinced that we had a corpse in front of us—I decided to continue my experiments, so I sat down on a chair, putting her body on the ground between my legs. I called in her maids and told them to apply mustard plasters to the legs of their mistress; I myself took off her blue satin corsets and poured cold water on her head. Her sister, in an attitude of despair and with her hands clasped as if in prayer, looked at her, half insane. I contented myself with simply lifting up the head of the seeming corpse,

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and showing her to her sister, saying, "How can you think that she is still alive."

Suddenly I saw on the table by my side a little bottle of ammonia. I seized it, wetted the cork, and put it in one of the nostrils of the dead woman. Two seconds afterwards she woke up, and so entirely that she immediately saw what had happened. There she was, sitting on the ground in her chemise, in a pool of cold water, between the knees of a man whom she did not know, and who was looking down upon her. Her sister gazed at her. Suddenly the Countess began to cry and to beg that they would let her die. It was terribly tragic. "Have pity on me," she said. "What have I done to you? Why do you make me suffer so? I want to end it all—to die," and the tears fell from her half-opened eyes.

"Unfortunately," I said, "I have made up my mind not to allow you that pleasure. How can I help making you suffer? I am suffering myself by making you suffer, and I bear you a serious grudge for it. How idiotic to poison yourself in the early morning. If you had only done it yesterday evening no one would have bothered you."

At length the silly things I said, one after another, made her smile, and at last laugh, but after a few words she immediately began to go to sleep again. By this time it was one o'clock. I therefore decided to have recourse to other means than shaking her.

"I am going to waltz with the Countess," I said to Madame Volodkovitch, "and you must have a cup of strong coffee ready all the time; whenever we stop in front of you, make her drink some."

Upon which I lifted up the Countess and held her, while her women tried to dry her wet chemise, but we had to leave this on her, because, with the exception of her shoes and stockings, it was the only garment she wore. We began to dance, stopping every time we went round in front of the coffee, but the moment we ceased dancing

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and she opened her mouth, she was asleep again and the coffee fell to the ground. During the whole time we danced she did not manage to swallow her coffee once. (To-day, a simple injection of caffeine would have been enough to wake her up.)

The waltz went on from one to five o'clock without stopping. I was dead with fatigue, but this fatigue was caused more by my own movement than any effort I had to make to drag my partner round. I was absolutely astonished at the facility with which, although half asleep, she managed to follow the steps of the dance.

At about five o'clock, she suddenly asked for a cigarette. It was time! I made her sit down by an open window overlooking the Grand Canal and gave her a cigarette, which she had the strength to light herself with the match I held out to her. It was a magnificent evening; the Salute was just opposite us, and around us the velvet air which one only finds in Venice.

I then put a white india-rubber bag, full of ice, on her head. "Now look at yourself as Beatrice Cenci!" I said; but it did not last. The cigarette fell from her lips and the ice-bag rolled to the ground.

I felt, however, that the fearful crisis was over, and that with a little more perseverance we should be able to save the unhappy woman.

"It's your turn now. You must continue my treatment," I said to Madame Volodkovitch, "for I am going home to sleep at least as soundly as the poisoned woman."

Two days afterwards a note from Madame Volodkovitch told me that they were going away and that she must see me, but as she could not leave her sister for a moment, she begged me to go to the hotel. "Only, for mercy's sake," she wrote, "do not let my sister see you, because with her proud disposition, the idea of having passed moments of such great intimacy with a man she did not know would be very terrible."

To this, I replied by pointing out that women do not

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understand each other. "The Countess is still very good-looking and extremely well made. This will suffice," I said, "for her to have no reason to bear me a grudge."

So I went to the hotel, and the first person I saw in the vestibule was the Countess, who called out from afar, "Come—come here, my saviour."

I seized this opportunity to ask for a few minutes of her time. "I have some rights in respect to your life, Countess, as it is I who saved it. Will you promise me that you will not destroy it? Our life is so short that it destroys itself! If, however, the idea ever comes to you so strongly that you cannot resist the temptation, for mercy's sake try to do it in the evening, so as to have the whole night before you, and in the morning no one will disturb you."

She laughed. I never saw her again. She died four years later, and it was said she had killed herself, but this time she did it with more circumspection, as they only suspected it.

There was a curse on that poor woman. Her son, a boy not quite seventeen, hanged himself. Her daughter, Princess Stcherbatoff, with her son and daughter, were massacred by the Bolsheviks. The fate of her sister, Madame Sophie Volodkovitch, whom I have just spoken of, was even more tragic. After having lost her husband —who, however, was not very interesting—she had the misery of seeing her only son, a charming young man of thirty years of age, studious and gifted with great intelligence, fall ill, and in consequence of this illness slip gradually into idiocy. But fate reserved for this poor woman still greater tragedy. This son, falling in love with a Polish lady who was his nurse, did not attempt to hide how much his mother annoyed him by her jealousy. One can realise the torment which this poor mother went through. Not only was she unable to devote herself to the son whom she adored, but she did not dare to go near him for fear of aggravating his illness. The young man died at last; and Madame Volodkovitch was assas-

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sinated in the railway carriage during a journey from Odessa to Cracow, where she was living.

The excellent and very amiable Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Saxe-Weimar (grandson of the Emperor Paul of Russia) came one day to me in Venice, saying that he wanted to see some of my work.

I showed him a lot of water-colours, which he examined with great care, and he particularly admired a large water-colour representing Fleet Street in London, the only painting I ever made of that city which was not bought at once. It was true that it did not look very well amongst water-colours representing Venice and Cairo.

"Do you really like it, Monseigneur?"

"Very, very much, and I tell you so most sincerely."

"Then will you allow me to offer it to you?"

This proposal seemed to him so unexpected that he appeared not to know whether he ought to accept it or what he ought to say.

"I offer it to you on one condition, Monseigneur—that is, that you keep it at home and do not send it to any exhibition."

"And I," he said, "will accept it on the condition that if you come to Weimar and want a studio, you will ask for one at the Academy there."

The daughter of the Grand Duke, Princess of Reuss—whom I met at Princess Hélène's at Petersburg—assured me that her father had kept his promise and never allowed this water-colour to be exhibited, in spite of the constant demands of people who wanted it.

One day the amiability of the Grand Duke put me into rather a hole.

After working all day in a gondola, I was going back at about a quarter to eight in the evening, when I found a note from Monsieur de Palésieu, saying that the Grand Duke asked me to dine with him at the Hôtel Britannia. I immediately sent a reply, asking Monsieur de Palésieu to excuse me as the Grand Duke's invitation did not come until a quarter to eight. My messenger took twenty-

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five minutes to go there and come back. When he arrived, he announced to me that the Grand Duke had said that I was to be waited for. I was already in bed—what was I to do? I had to get up, shave, and dress in a hurry impossible to describe, and did not reach the hotel until nine o'clock. There, I found the Grand Duke, Monsieur de Palésieu, and an aide-de-camp walking up and down a room where the table was laid.

One day, to my great joy, the Grand Duchess Catherine, with her daughter Princess Hélène and her maid-of-honour Mademoiselle de Bellegarde, arrived at Venice in a magnificent railway carriage. I, of course, put myself at their service, to show them the beauties of the city, while M. de Schwanebach, their Chamberlain—a great Philistine on questions of art—was only too pleased to get out of his duties and responsibilities.

I explained to their Highnesses what were to me the essential conditions to enable a traveller to carry away an ineffaceable recollection of Venice, whose special charm consists, above all, in its picturesque character. Those who do not take the trouble to understand, or who are not sufficiently artists to see this, observe nothing but decay, death, and decrepitude everywhere, as Barrès has done; and those who only take pleasure in going about in a gondola on the Grand Canal, carry away with them nothing but impressions of hotels and gondoliers.

In those days, the Lido was not in the least interesting. It was the little canals and the little streets that I showed to these ladies. Since then, all that has changed and a great deal of the picturesque nature of the city disappears, almost as one looks at it.

As to pictures, I begged them not to fill their memory with superficial impressions, but to look well at six or seven and try to seize and fix in their memory that general tonality which distinguishes the Venetian from other schools of painting. As pictures to remember I chose the Bellini in the church of San Zaccaria, which in those days still hung in the sacristy. After a short walk I asked

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their Highnesses to sit down and rest in front of this picture for ten minutes at least. I then asked them to compare the impressions they had received with those which other pictures in the interior of the church produced on them, as we were walking to the door. In the ducal palace I asked the ladies to notice the Ariadne and Bacchus of Tintoretto.

In the church of the Frari it was the Titian of Pesaro that I specially directed them to look at. And at the Academy of the Fine Arts it was the Assumption by Titian, which was kept there, and particularly the St. Thomas of Cima di Conegliano, which I wanted them to see. I do not know any picture of his time—or even of recent times—where the realism of expression is so perfectly rendered.

The Grand Duchess said she would like to pay a visit to the Princess of Montenegro, who had settled down at Venice after the murder of her husband and her own renunciation of her rights in favour of her brother-in-law, the late King Nicholas of Montenegro. She was a clever woman and exceptionally intelligent, who lived with her daughter and her sister in a very simple way, especially after the death of the French Emperor, because the pension that she received from Napoleon III no longer came to her. I also think that the pension which Russia allowed her was not altogether certain; in any case she often said so. Of course all this was before the marriage of the King of Italy with her niece the daughter of King Nicholas.

I remember one evening spent with the two Russian Princesses at the Princess of Montenegro's, where, except myself, there was no other man but the great poet Browning. A charming Countess Canevaro sang beautifully, and Princess Hélène, whose voice was specially adapted for solo singing, was so much admired by the old poet that he showed his pleasure by asking her to sing the Russian song "The Red Sarafan."

I can still see the sweet amiable Grand Duchess asking her daughter quite seriously to do as the poet wanted.

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"Don't do it, Princess," I said in a low voice in Russian. "You would only make yourself look ridiculous in the presence of a musician like Countess Canevaro."

And under the pretext of not being able to sing this wretched thing without an accompaniment, Princess Hélène managed to refuse the old poet, accustomed as he was to being petted and spoiled by all the English and American ladies who lived in Venice.

For instance, at Mrs. Bronson's there was a chair in the corner of the drawing-room, railed off by a chain from the other chairs. It was the chair where Browning had sat one day. There were, however, English people who were not enthusiasts. I asked one of them, who had spent the preceding evening in the company of the poet, what she thought of him. "He drops his h's," she replied, smiling.

Mrs. Bronson was a lady who, having done a lot of good in Venice, was given the freedom of the city. She told me, amongst other things, that she always gave gondoliers and poor people soap—because, according to her, unfaithfulness was generally caused by dirt!

The local authorities being always ready to please, I was able to arrange a pleasure party to Padua for their Highnesses. Their luxurious Russian private car was put on to a siding, where it waited for us, whilst we embarked in a steamboat which took us to Fusina. From there we went by tramway to Padua, passing through villages which stand quite close together, and which are always interesting for anyone who wants to see something of a country and its ways. The ladies, whose cicerone I was, were not specially interested in art, so I wanted them to see the poetic side of this country, where every old building, thanks to the historic life it represents, speaks to the imagination of the people of the North, where such memories are rarer and come down from a more recent period.

We walked through the town and then went to the church of St. Anthony of Padua, and I showed them the precincts of the church, which are poetic to the last degree. Surrounded by a great cloister, one of whose sides is covered by

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mortuary stones, more or less artistically carved, and the other made by a row of columns, this courtyard, covered with turf, in the centre of which a magnificent magnolia grows, is the place from which the towers of the church look most picturesque.

We also looked at the Giottos. But I begged the two ladies not to take the exaggerations of Ruskin and various Professors of Art History in the German Universities too seriously. I then took them to the University—one of the oldest in the world—where Galileo taught for years. I showed them the hall where his pupil Torricelli, the creator of the barometer, held his classes in the seventeenth century; also the laboratory where Volta worked, and the statue of Napoleon dressed as a young Greek, in the University courtyard, by Canova. But I did not want to leave the University without showing them a most typical Italian. A few months before, the man who was taking us round had made me a speech to explain the working of an instrument of ancient date, composed of glass tubes of different diameters, and balls. This instrument was supposed to represent human life. Directly its vertical position was changed, some drops of a red liquid which were in the tubes began to move, sometimes very quickly and sometimes more slowly. This was intended to show the different epochs of a man's life, and towards the end came a movement always getting feebler, representing the agony of death.

I asked the ladies to pay attention for five minutes whilst the guardian described the instrument. He at once put on the manner of a professor and described minutely how this instrument impressed him. When he came to the last agony he explained melodramatically that Death was a law of Nature and that there was nothing to be done; one must just submit to it. But he said it all with such variety in his attitudes, eyes, and gestures that the greatest actor in the world could not have done better. The truth is that every Italian is born an actor. What would the honest man have said, had he known

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that one of his audience was the cousin of the Emperor of all the Russias!

The Grand Duchess and her daughter then went on to Rome and Sorrento, and Princess Hélène wrote me a charming Russian letter from the latter—in which she says:

"The people are sympathetic, simple, and gay, often beautiful. All day long they work hard—on the sea by fishing, and on land in the orange and olive groves. And they sing curious melodies which remind me of our people's songs—always from the chest—the same tone and semi-tone in the descending scale, and the long pause on the last note. It sounds so wonderful when one is on a height and the song comes up through the silver leaves of the olive trees. They remind me, too, of the Persian songs of Rubinstein, and once or twice I have replied to the invisible singer by one of these songs, so that a sort of duet came between us—a conversation in different melodies—my interlocutor finishing by imitating my song. . . . From Sorrento we went back to Rome—where Professor Helbig took us through the galleries, showing us the sculpture and the pictures from the historic point of view. It was very interesting, but the amount of new impressions was so great that I became dreadfully tired and did not derive much pleasure from it. What is strange is that all these artistic marvels did not give me half the delight that the little carved wood bas-reliefs and ornaments which you showed me in Venice gave me. You see what a barbarian I am." [These were probably the wood-carvings of the celebrated Brustolon.] . . . "And the aureole with which I had embellished Rome in imagination has disappeared—and the celebrated views did not please me—the only thing which spoke to my heart was the Campagna, for there is space and light, and the smell of the steppe."

I sympathised with the feelings of the Princess for natural beauty which touched her heart, so intensely Russian in its inmost depths. And I admired, too, the frankness with which she expressed her indifference to the celebrated views of Rome, which doubtless depend more for their fame on their historical association than on the beauty of their lines.

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CHAPTER XIX

I DO not remember which year it was that I made the acquaintance of Madame Duse. I only know that it was at an evening party at Princess Hatzfeldt's, where Madame Acton introduced her.

I recollect the admiration that Madame Acton had for Duse, and I could easily see the impression that Madame Acton perforce made on this great actress. She was the first young woman of the world that Madame Duse came to know intimately, and was, at the same time, one of the most remarkable of such women that she could have met, and therefore she took immense pains to contemplate and understand her. Often, the better to study her, Madame Duse would sit on the floor in the middle of the room, begging Madame Acton not to pay any attention to her. Their natures, while absolutely different, were both beautiful, and knew their own value, each in her own line. Duse had noticed and copied a little characteristic trait of Madame Acton—the movement of her hands.

I cannot remember what was the occasion of the talk with Madame Duse that evidently inspired this letter of mine, which her daughter was good enough to give back to me long afterwards. I see that it was written in 1888, at Venice, through which she was passing. The impression that this extraordinary woman made on me was very great, as the contents of this letter show very clearly. Here is the letter:

"DEAR AND GOOD MADAME DUSE,

"I was so happy to see, to talk to you, and to hear you, that I forgot to take the photograph you gave me. I want very much to have it as a souvenir of a day that

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I shall never forget. Your fine and sensitive nature, your beautiful and sweet face, follow me all the time; it is like a melody that one cannot get rid of. I want to see you before I go to Russia, and I hope that your promise to come to Venice will be realised. In any case, do not forget one thing—that I am sincerely devoted to you and that you can count on me everywhere and always. Take care of yourself—that is the only thing I ask you. Love *something*, do not always love *someone*. In loving someone, one always suffers; in loving something—never.

"The theatre is not enough for you; the vulgar public has too much power to-day, especially in Italy. Make up your mind to travel, for in foreign countries you will have a cultivated audience. I am sure that your successes abroad would do you good from every point of view. You would find friends worthy of you, and without jealousy. Life is so short; do profit by the great physical charms that you possess, thanks to your youth."

I remember that we talked together on very serious questions. For instance, how to insure her life for the good of her daughter—for her husband, with whom she no longer lived, was one of those individuals who would have taken advantage of the Italian laws which were in force at that moment to seize any sums due to the daughter.

I promised to help her as much as I could when I came back from Egypt, where I thought of going at the end of November. I must admit that I was beginning to be tired of the eternal Venice, and I heard people speak of Egypt with so much admiration that I decided to go to that country for several months, so as to see for myself if there were any interesting subjects for a water-colour painter.

In the month of November I said good-bye to my friends and family, and started for Brindisi to catch a P. & O. boat which was leaving for Ismailia.

Immediately I reached Cairo, I went and hunted for the house of the banker, Bircher, whose address I had. He lived in the Arab quarter of Moussky, in a big, very much frequented street. The old Arab door of this house

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was so low that one had to bend down to get into the spacious hall, which had no proper flooring. It was generally there that the Arab servants sat, hunched up. From this hall one went into a court, into which the windows of the ground-floor opened, thus providing light for the offices of the banker, where a number of Europeans worked.

Into this same courtyard opened a little staircase, and through several rather complicated passages one came to a large room situated on the fourth story, which for many years had served as a studio for the celebrated painter Leopold Müller. I at once hired it, and had the great luck to be able to get a little apartment in the same house. A Swiss woman—who was with Monsieur Bircher—made my bed and prepared my meals and coffee. I lived there six winters and finished the sketches which I took during my various excursions.

In front of the studio there was a little terrace on which I often sat, to think—what about, I could not say; but *why* I sat there I do know. It was because at certain times, when the moon was nearly at its zenith—and to see her it was necessary to hold up one's head very high—the light striking on the roofs and walls had a curious hypnotic effect, such as I have never seen in Europe.

One day, early in the morning, I went out to explore and investigate all the corners of the Arab town, and in the afternoon I took a donkey to reach the boundaries of it. When I came to a place where I saw a magnificent effect of sunset over the tombs of the Mameluks, I told my donkey-man to wait for me before a house, and I went to look for a spot where the effect which I had perceived would be more remarkable. I thus arrived at a series of small houses, built one on the top of the other, and covered with terraces, between which there were little staircases, which I mounted, one after the other, until I got to the top. I then saw that on the other side of this house there was a very high wall, at the bottom of which there were men walking up and down. The moment they

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saw me they began to cry out, while from the openings which were in the middle of the terraces there emerged two or three old witches, who looked furious and cursed me, all the time turning away from me with horror.

A man came up to me and took me gently by the hand. I explained to him that I wanted to see the view, to "zaoure"—which they told me was the Egyptian word signifying "to paint." He tried to make me understand that I was in the middle of the harem and must go away at once. As I went down the terraces, I saw a lot of people coming out of various openings who seemed to be sorry for the necessity of sending me away, and when from below I cried out to them in Arabic, "Catarhérak" ("I thank you"), they bowed their heads and waved to me with their hands.

While I was in Egypt, Madame Acton wrote me letters which showed me that her friendship with Madame Duse was growing. "Duse is at Naples," she told me, "so ill that I should like to go to her. She has been two months in bed and is now getting up, but has to go through a long and painful treatment lasting, perhaps, three months. She is alone, and the idea that she is suffering makes me so unhappy that I have the greatest longing to help her."

In another letter from Turin she said that she had tried to see Madame Duse's little girl, who was in a college for the daughters of soldiers, under the patronage of the Queen; but unfortunately the head of the school was out, and without her permission no one was allowed to see the children, "and to-morrow I go on to Paris," she added.

I soon began to work in the streets and never had the slightest unpleasantness with the people, though there were particular streets where they warned me not to paint because the population was rather fanatical—but those were the ones that most attracted me! I came back year after year and never had the least trouble. When they saw me arrive, in the shops—or rather in the small booths of these streets—I was received with endless salutations and joyous expressions on their faces. It is only in this

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sort of street that one can get to know what the people are really like.

To reproduce one view that I liked, I arranged a place where I could sit between two booths. Opposite me there was one where they sold oranges and behind me the booth belonged to a butcher. In the orange shop there was a table about 1½ metres square, nearly covered with fruit, behind which a young girl of sixteen or seventeen used to sit. At the back of the shop was her mother. I saw the young girl's profile, because her yashmak, which prevented the public from seeing her full face, did not stop me seeing her sideways.

She had a most delicate face, slightly bronzed, hands such as one only finds in this country, and feet which looked as if they had only just come out of the bath. What was marvellous was the variety of expression upon the face of this young girl, according to the type of buyer who was speaking to her. Sometimes she was indifferent, sometimes sad, sometimes gay, sometimes discouraged, sometimes radiant. Often I made Mahomet, who was sitting beside me, explain what she was saying. The expression of real affliction which her physiognomy took when some vulgar buyer made some dirty joke was that of a saint blushing—though I must confess I never heard of a saint blushing.

The butcher came in the morning to open his booth, and hung up the carcass of a little goat or sheep on a hook. As he was behind me, I could not study his way of selling, but he had next to him a little boy of about four, who was already wearing a fez. This little boy often came quite close to me and astonished me by his ways. It was clear that he was trying to protect me from the public—the people who from time to time filled the street, to see what I was doing. One day when the crowd seemed to be annoying me, and the little boy noticed how displeased I was, he touched my leg to draw my attention, and then putting the ten little fingers of his baby hands together, he shot them out in the direction of the public, opening

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them with a snap as if to push them back, and crying, "Imchi" ("Go away").

The beauty of the movement of the little arms and hands and the voice was such that I burst out laughing. And the crowd in the street, prompted by this, told the baby to ask me for baksheesh, which in the end he did, but so delicately that I could scarcely hear him. I told Mahomet to tell the people that had he not asked for it, I should have given it to him. What did the baby do then? He touched me gently on the arm and bent his head as if he wanted to say something. I turned round to hear him, and in a little whisper he said, "Malèche" ("It doesn't matter").

Where in any other country in the world would you find such a child? How is it possible not to love that country?

I met some nice people at Mena House, amongst others, the family of Mr. Harrison (brother of the famous Frederic Harrison), with his wife and daughter. One day this gentleman came up to me and asked me if I was not Mr. Roussoff, although I was entered in the hotel as "Wolkoff." On my replying in the affirmative, he expressed the pleasure he had in making my acquaintance, and asked me to come and dine with him in London when he was back. "I have ten of your water-colours," he said, as if to tempt me.

"In that case," I replied, "I will only come on one condition, and that is that you turn them all against the wall, as I have no wish to see them again." Indeed, I can say quite frankly that at this time this feeling was very strong in me. I was always looking forward to what I was going to do to-morrow. Everything I had done yesterday seemed to me bad, and I did not want to see it again.

Harrison suffered, as I did, from conjunctivitis, so we used to put drops of nitrate of silver into each other's eyes—a solution of 1/30 strength. This was sold at Cairo to everyone, without any doctor's prescription.

Mrs. Harrison was very agreeable, and her daughter was

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very remarkable in many ways. She was very plucky, and painted in the month of May, sitting about on the pyramids without being the least frightened of the snakes which came out from under the stones, often two yards away. She used to catch the big spiders—which are all dangerous in Egypt—by their hind legs, make a hole in the body of the insect, plunge it into water, and then show her friends the wonderful substance that came out into the glass, like brilliant shining filaments. But these were only jokes.

Miss Harrison had put together an album of Egyptian photographs. I have never seen a better collection, from the point of view of production and beauty. Thanks to her admirable patience, much practical sense, and the eye of an artist, she knew how to choose her subjects and to photograph them in a masterly way. A servant used to bring her apparatus and put it where she wanted. Then the Arab went away, and she would lie on the grass or on the sand, holding the tube in her hand, waiting for the interesting moment. In this way she had managed to reproduce scenes with women in them which it would have been impossible to take by any other means. I wonder where that admirable album of photographs is now? Does it still exist? And where is that charming woman who was so full of life and energy?

At the time of which I speak, Mena House was still building. There were a great number of rooms occupied, but the hall presented a very strange appearance to a traveller coming in with his luggage seeking for an office where he might engage rooms. The truth is that there was no bureau for this purpose. The sight that struck the visitor most was a long and large Turkish divan leaning against one of the walls, on which a number of beautiful English ladies were half lying, half sitting, with young men by their side, who often put their heads on the women's knees. What seemed to me very extraordinary was the fact that both the men and women looked as if they belonged to decent society. One could not under-

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stand such goings-on in the most popular part of the hotel where everyone made their entrance.

Little by little I got to know some of these people and ventured to criticise their behaviour. "It is either too much or too little," I said. "It is too much for people who do not care about each other; and too little for people who want more."

One moonlight night, one of the young women, whom I did not know, who had heard my criticism, came to me and said she wanted to talk to me on the terrace. She was the most beautiful of the ladies who sat on the divan —a woman of about twenty-five to thirty years of age, fair, with delicate regular features, very well made, with beautiful hands and feet, and speaking French well.

"I heard you stating your opinion, sir," she said. "I want to ask your advice for a friend of mine. Will you give it to me?"

"Mademoiselle, I await your orders."

"This friend is married," she said. "She has an excellent husband who is in England at this moment. She is afraid of being unfaithful to him, as she has been seized by a sudden passion against which she is fighting, but is afraid that she cannot fight long. If she gives way, she knows that she will be doing wrong; but if she does not give way, she will suffer horribly. What ought she to do?"

"Mademoiselle, this lady, your friend—has she ever felt for her *husband* the sentiments she *now* feels?"

"No; she did not know they existed. Her husband is an excellent and noble type of man, but he does not know what passion means."

"In that case, mademoiselle, I should not be hard on her if she gave rein to her feelings, especially if she could do so without the husband knowing anything about it, because I place the right to love higher than the duties of marriage; but it is not the question of the passion of your friend which ought to decide the problem."

"What then should decide it?"

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"The important thing is: what sort of man has excited the passion? What is he like? Does she think him a superior man, a mediocre man, or a totally unworthy individual?"

I had already noticed the gentleman, as it was he who often leant his head against the knees of the pretty lady.

She was silent, and then she said, "I think that he is not worth very much."

"Then," I answered, "your friend has only one thing to do. She ought to leave at once. If she gives way to him, twenty-four hours afterwards she will be the most unhappy of women. She will soon understand that her passion was nothing but a physical affair, and the remembrance that he had taken advantage of it would become the nightmare of her whole life."

"Yes," she said with conviction. "As a man he is not worth much."

"Well, tell your friend to leave in twenty-four hours; that is my advice."

The charming lady held out her hand without saying anything, but I felt that she was trembling.

I left Mena House next day and never thought of the beautiful fair lady again, nor did I know whether she had followed my advice.

When I came back to Mena House, a year after, the hall no longer looked the same and, except for a few people who came every year, the guests were different.

Four or five years later a Scottish lady sent a message to me by a stranger, to say that she often thought of me with the greatest gratitude.

There were at Mena House two young men who could not stand each other. One was an Englishman called D——, the other an Austrian Pole, who had been an officer of cavalry in Austria. His name was R——. D—— was a very handsome fellow, very well made, and with a beautiful baritone voice. The Pole was not so handsome, as he had a big nose and stooped a little, but he had broader shoulders than the other, and rode admirably.

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Every time I went to Cairo I met D—— lounging around. "What are you doing here?" I asked him.

"I am hunting for a woman with twenty-five thousand a year," he replied.

He was probably jealous of the success which the Pole enjoyed with certain ladies. He was always squabbling with him over a number of totally unimportant questions. Amongst others, as to whether boxing was any use for personal defence. The Pole would not admit that there was any practical use in boxing, and D—— often said to me, "I will kick him," making a great punch with the closed fist of his right hand against the palm of his left.

One day after dinner, when we were all sitting together in the drawing-room, D—— again started the question of boxing. It was evident that he was longing to give the Pole a kick. However, the latter pretended that he was not the least afraid, and would know how to defend himself if necessary. The discussion became more and more acrimonious and at last frightened the ladies, who preferred to move away to some distance.

All of a sudden, D—— took off his coat and came towards the Pole, who went quietly into the middle of the room. In a moment the scene was changed in the most unexpected way, and D—— found his head seized and put under the left arm of the Pole, who held him motionless, while indicating with his right arm that he could kill him if he wanted. After a few seconds he let him go.

The surprise of the assembled guests was great. The ladies did not know whether to be pleased at the success of the Pole or disappointed. On the one hand, they admired the Pole's courage, calmness, and cleverness; on the other hand, the vanquished man was an Englishman, and the prestige of boxing had suffered! The two antagonists being men of the world, the episode had no further result and was soon forgotten.

While I was at Cairo I received a letter from Madame Duse, who asked me to come to her assistance if she

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decided to make a tour in Russia. I replied at once that I was going to write to several of the most cultivated women in Society there, women whose opinions mattered, and who certainly would understand and help her, although I felt sure that an artist as great as she was had no need of help, provided that her health was good and that she could bear the horrible climate.

In May I came back to Venice, delighted with Cairo and promising myself that I would go back next year. Venice was already pretty empty; Princess Metternich had gone, perhaps never to come back; Princess Hatzfeldt was at Riva; and Madame Acton, after having been to Paris and London, had gone to join her friend the Countess Drechsel at Tegernsee.

I set to work to finish my water-colours which I had started in Egypt, and was working ten to twelve hours a day, when suddenly we received a telegram from Baroness Gablentz, mother of Madame Acton, telling us that her daughter had died at Tegernsee on the 12th of July 1889.

A few days later someone told me that, having taken a boat which was tied up at the bottom of the Drechsels' garden, and having rowed out into the open, she gave a great cry, threw herself into the water, and was drowned.

Before this accomplished fact there was nothing to be done but to bow one's head.

That is how the existence of that beautiful, noble, delicate nature ended, and one asked oneself in vain what chain of circumstances could have paralysed her mental perceptions? What injury could have wounded her soul to such a point that she preferred annihilation to any other kind of reparation? I must own that, side by side with my grief, I felt enraged also, and asked myself if any woman would ever commit suicide if she knew that after her death her body would be hanged and left naked to the public gaze—as is said to be the custom in Montenegro.

Countess Drechsel, to whom I wrote at once, could give no explanation. She thought that Madame Acton must have gone mad, especially as she had kept telling her

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that she had believed herself to be mad for the last ten years. But as I had known her well for eight or nine years, I knew how absurd this opinion was.

Having left her in November of the year before, I had not seen her for seven months, and she had spent the last two months in Paris. During this time she had written me very sensible letters, and besides, I knew her well enough to realise that if she had *meant* to commit suicide, she would have done it quietly, without drawing attention to herself, whereas they told me that for two weeks she had been in a continual state of extreme excitement, so much so, wrote the Countess, that the doctor—to whom she confided that Madame Acton, seemingly in very high spirits, kept continually playing the fool—had declared that he considered it a serious pathological case.

My opinion is that the poor woman considered herself forced to take this step, so as to hide something which filled her soul with despair, and as she knew that people did not often see her depressed, she indulged in extravagancies of every kind to conceal what she really felt.

A few days afterwards Princess Hatzfeldt wrote to me :

"MY DEAR, GOOD FRIEND,

"I have just found your address, and I want to take your hand in mine in this time of our mutual affliction. I can think of nothing but my sorrow in having lost this friend, whom I loved as if she had been my own child, and who was the joy and happiness of my old age. I want so much to see you again. Will you come this winter to Venice ? I had at first thought that I should not go back to that city—whose sun she was, for me—but everything that surrounds me there will speak to me of her. I cannot write more—but I just wanted to tell you, my dear, dear friend, that I am sharing your sad thoughts from the depth of my heart.

"Your old friend,

"MARY HATZFELDT."

I do not know how I spent the summer; I only know that I waited with impatience for the month of November

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to come, so that I could go back to Egypt to forget, in the company of nature and my work, the awful sorrows that life sometimes brings to us.

When I got to Cairo, I began to paint again, but for some time things did not go well, as I was ill. Soon after my arrival I received a letter from Princess Bariatinsky announcing the death of her mother, and telling me how she was suffering morally and mentally.

I sent her the following letter (which her daughters found after her death and which they gave me back):

"My dear, good Princess,

"I often think of you. I had written a long letter to you, speaking of my physical suffering. To-day I hear of your mental suffering—and I have torn up the letter.

"I only want to tell you this: that I feel just as you feel. I have plenty of time to think. I get up before sunrise, and sitting at the feet of the Sphinx, that I am copying, I wait for the first rays of the day. In this majestic solitude, surrounded by sand as far as one can see, one can think so well. That imbecile Sphinx, who has stared straight in front of him for millions of years, sees how we pass away, and probably regards us as passing insects. You know that I am a person who tries to analyse ideas and impressions, but that does not prevent me from having, like you, numberless confused and vague ideas, which make me feel and enjoy without knowing the reason. These make me suffer, both for myself and those I love. Only it seems to me that believers—if they are *really* believers—should never give way to despair; sorrow in this life down here, in their eyes, is only a small misfortune. For you, dear Princess, everything must have a certain and fixed end. I understand why poets are so rarely believers. It is the unknown in nature, the impossibility of knowing and of unveiling the secrets of nature, that has developed their fantasy and imagination and led them to hunt for analogies; but he who is in danger of losing himself in the vagueness of contemplation risks disaster and may end by producing nothing worth having. So that although I am at this moment thinking of you and your troubles, I still examine carefully the shadow which the Sphinx has thrown on the

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sand, and ask myself whether it is blue or yellow. That is life, or rather *my* life. Sadness has never been able to kill the energy in me. Even when I look at the effect of light—at some marvellous sunset or cold dawn, I say to myself: What are our sorrows in comparison with that *eternal tranquillity*? I try to analyse without losing myself in myself. I study details and the reasons for the impressions that they make on me. Thought has never paralysed my faculty for seeing, and that is the reason of my small talent. With the faculty of discernment, despair disappears, becomes impossible, and one's thoughts grow more just and less personal. The idea of the distance that separates me from my dearly beloved wife and children (of whom I am not worthy, as my friends say) depresses me, but face to face with nature I no longer think about it.

"Nobody, I believe, can understand your feelings better than I do, because I understand them in all their delicacy.

"I always saw your mother's nature as a whole, eliminating all detail, though sometimes the details surprised me. But I loved even these surprises, because I understood them. My only desire in life is to be just, and to be just one must be able to understand.

"My health is better again and my energy coming back. Only all the sorrows of this past year have produced, so the doctors say, a bad condition of my liver. They tell me I must go and do a cure at Carlsbad, and perhaps I shall meet you there."

The episodes which follow do not really come in any chronological order, but happened at intervals during five or six journeys to Egypt.

One of the most interesting subjects at Cairo, from the point of view of the painter, was the extraordinary profile of the tombs of the Caliphs when seen before sunrise. Such an effect cannot be noted anywhere in Europe. Everything is merged in such harmonious tonalities that, however strong, they never look crude. Some minutes before the sun gets above the horizon, the sky is tinted with beautiful colours, ranging from silver to bluish grey, and the cupolas stand out more clearly than usual because

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they appear to be nearer the beholder—the nearest one is pure indigo—and as the cupolas gradually seem to disappear farther back, the indigo is transformed into blue. In the silver sky, long white clouds deepen into vermilion as they near the horizon; farther back, they are lilac in the shade and brilliant rose where the sun has already touched them.

Between the tombs and the cupolas, the mountain of Mokattam appears, which, being still in the shade, is a pure cobalt, whilst the highest peaks are rose-coloured, because of the light which the red clouds throw over them.

But to see all that, one must get up at two o'clock in the morning, take a donkey-man and a revolver, and get off quickly, because it is a long way and one has to go through the most dangerous parts of the town. At three o'clock one is sufficiently near to study the different parts of the profile and choose the view preferred. Then one waits patiently in the saddle until the moment comes.

I had already done this journey two or three times, and always arrived back at the house at five o'clock. On the third occasion I wished to study the effects of light which appeared as the sun rose and shone on the tombs. But I began to be very hungry and had to search for a café. From where I was I could see that the sun was shining on the whole plain, and in front of me there was an ordinary cemetery. The cemetery was an enormous one and I could scareely see where it ended. However, I thought I saw a little house, and towards this I directed my donkey. When I arrived there I got down and knocked at the door, which was still shut. No answer. Then I put my eye to the keyhole and saw a donkey asleep in the middle of the little room, which had no flooring.

After I had knocked a long time at the door, a man came out.

"I want bread and coffee," I said.

The man explained to Mahomet that there was no bread.

"Well, then, some coffee."

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He made this and gave it to me, but without sugar, and I could not drink it.

"I shall stay here," I said to Mahomet, "but you must get on the donkey and ride as fast as you can to the town to buy some bread and sugar and bring them to me here."

After I had waited for Mahomet for more than an hour, I began to get tired, and having nothing better to do, I decided to walk across the vast cemetery to see a village which was on the other side. After having walked for about twenty minutes between the different tombs which were half-covered with sand, I suddenly found myself opposite three individuals who were crouching behind a tomb playing at cards on the stone of a grave which had fallen over. I had only to look at them for a second to see that they were playing a game which is known throughout the universe, and which consists in finding the "king," which the player tries to hide by putting him with two other cards, the place of the third card being continually changed.

The men looked at me very unpleasantly. Even if they did not take me for someone who had followed them, I was, in their eyes, a foreigner in the middle of their cemetery, and I saw that the adventure might turn out badly, and that I might be obliged to use my revolver, which I had never had occasion to take out in Egypt, when all of a sudden the idea came to me to take advantage of my quickness at card tricks. Without saying a word, I knelt down amongst them, and while they looked at me in great astonishment, I took up all the cards and made them into a pack, which I held out in turn to the bandits. They each took a card, which they put back into the pack, after having looked at it. A minute afterwards I showed them the cards which they had chosen. Never shall I forget the expression on their faces when they saw the cards I found so easily.

Without speaking a word, I got up again and went on through the cemetery. After having gone two or three

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hundred paces, I looked round from behind a tomb to see what they were doing. They were all there in the same place, looking at me without moving.

After some time I lost sight of them, and my attention was taken up by an occurrence which might also have been unpleasant. I had just arrived at the end of the cemetery, not far from the village I wanted to see, when it became evident that the inhabitants of the village had watched me for a long time walking about their cemetery, because one by one more and more individuals came together and walked towards me. Before I describe how I received these men, I must explain to the reader two things. Firstly, that I always took with me a very large stick, and, secondly, I knew better than anyone else how to *chiquenaude*. I had learnt this from my father when I was a child, and he had taught me to practise it on other people. One has to put the end of the third finger between the thumb and first finger, and hit out as hard as one can with it.

It is easy to understand the effect of the blow given thus, because in reality it is the nail of the finger that does it. One can bear it on the *palm* of the hand, but it hurts very much if it catches one on the *back* of the hand.

When I came to the last of the graves, I sat down on one of them, propped up horizontally and leaning against another, which was in a vertical position. During this time a dozen individuals, young and old, came round me and began examining me closely. With my big stick I made a large semicircle in front of me in the sand, and with my hands I tried to make them understand that no one had the right to come beyond that space. But that did not make any impression on the men, who wanted to see me nearer, and several tried to get inside the circle. Immediately they received on their hand a *chiquenaude* which stupefied them. It seemed to them so extraordinary that they could not understand it, and thought it was a case of sorcery. Each of the bandits received one blow; some, to verify their impressions, went out of

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their way to have it twice, but nobody dared to leave their foot inside the circle.

At last, with a great many cries of astonishment, they brought a blind boy, making signs that I was to give him a *chiquenaude* on the forehead, evidently with the idea of giving him back his sight. Instead of a *chiquenaude*, I gave him a piece of silver, and then they all began to demand and shriek for "baksheesh—baksheesh."

At last Mahomet came back, and the proprietor of the café—who had seen the direction I had taken—called his attention to the crowd in front of the village produced by my presence. Mahomet had walked round the cemetery and eventually joined me. He had a large piece of bread and some sugar, but I did not want to go all the way back to the café, and we returned to Cairo by the usual route.

For nearly a week after this the nail of my right-hand third finger was dreadfully painful, and all its life it has never had a better opportunity of displaying its valour.

In one narrow street I came upon the door of a mosque which was interesting enough to copy. The house opposite—as if arranged for the purpose—had a recess which ended in a spacious court.

I told Mahomet to put my camp-stool in this recess, and I had already begun to paint when a lot of individuals —black, bronze, and white—came out of this courtyard and swore at me, telling me that I must go away at once. God knows what they would have done to me had not, all of a sudden, a voice from the interior of the court appeased them. I then saw a young man, small and delicate-looking, dressed in European clothes but wearing a fez. He came towards me, while all these bullies, who were evidently his servants, made him an obeisance with their whole body, as is done in Egypt before a person of distinction.

I said to the young man, in French, "I wanted to paint

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the entrance of the mosque opposite. If you are the proprietor of this house, will you allow me to stay here for an hour or so ? "

" Certainly," he said in very good French. " I will tell my people to leave you in peace ; but," he added, " will you allow me to sit by you and talk for a little while ? I have so few opportunities of speaking French."

" I shall be only too delighted," I replied.

He then told me that he was only seventeen years of age, but had studied a great deal and knew Arabic as very few people did, and had already translated several European books into Arabic.

" What books ? " I asked—and what was my astonishment when he told me that he had translated Herbert Spencer.

This, I must confess, impressed me profoundly. I should never have thought that even the *name* of Herbert Spencer was known in these countries, but to know that his works were translated, and especially by a youth of seventeen, was an interesting new fact, which made me want to go more deeply into the question, so as to discover why he had developed an interest in the philosopher, and to find out if the translation was well done, also whether the Arabic language was flexible enough to adapt itself to modern philosophy, so I expressed my great admiration to him.

He next asked me if I could recommend some book that would interest him, and I mentioned, " Conflicts between Religion and Science," by Draper.

Then we said good-bye, and I promised him to go in next day to have a cup of coffee with him.

His palace was situated in the middle of the courtyard. I found him in a room with a man much older than himself, probably his father, perhaps even the Sheik in person —but I did not make this out. My hours were precious in Egypt, and I even had to avoid the street in which the house of the Sheik el Bekri was, for his servants, knowing that their master liked talking to me, were always trying

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to make me go in ; they even waylaid my servant Mahomet to induce him to explain this to me.

Five or six years later I was again at Cairo. One day I saw an illuminated mosque and they told me that there was a feast in honour of Sheik el Bekri. An enormous procession passed in front of me, preceded by hundreds of beggars crying out, followed by all sorts of people. Then, on a magnificently saddled ass, came a man in a white turban. He was very bent and looked like an old man, but I recognised in him the young man of some years before. After his appearance, the procession went on for a long time and I remained at my place until it had passed; then I took a cab and set out for the house of Sheik el Bekri.

There, in the courtyard, on a terrace at the top of six or seven steps, all the religious and civil dignitaries of Cairo were sitting round my former acquaintance. A great part of the courtyard was covered with tables, at which the beggars were eating.

I was curious to see if the Sheik would recognise me. I went up to the terrace, and directly he perceived me he came to meet me, held out his hand, and presented me to the assembled guests. It would have been immensely interesting if I could have talked to these gentlemen, but, with the exception of the young man, nobody spoke French. Without being able to speak the language, travelling in these countries is limited to visual impressions. When I said that I wanted to learn Arabic, Englishmen would say that really to know it thoroughly takes a great many years, and that even when one does speak the language, the Arabs take one for an Egyptian and have no respect for one. I do not, however, believe that that is true.

One day when I was hunting in the environs of Cairo for picturesque spots, apart from those of the verdant zone, which marks the passage between the Nile and the sand, I saw clearly that there was a house of European aspect not far from a village called Bédréchine. I told

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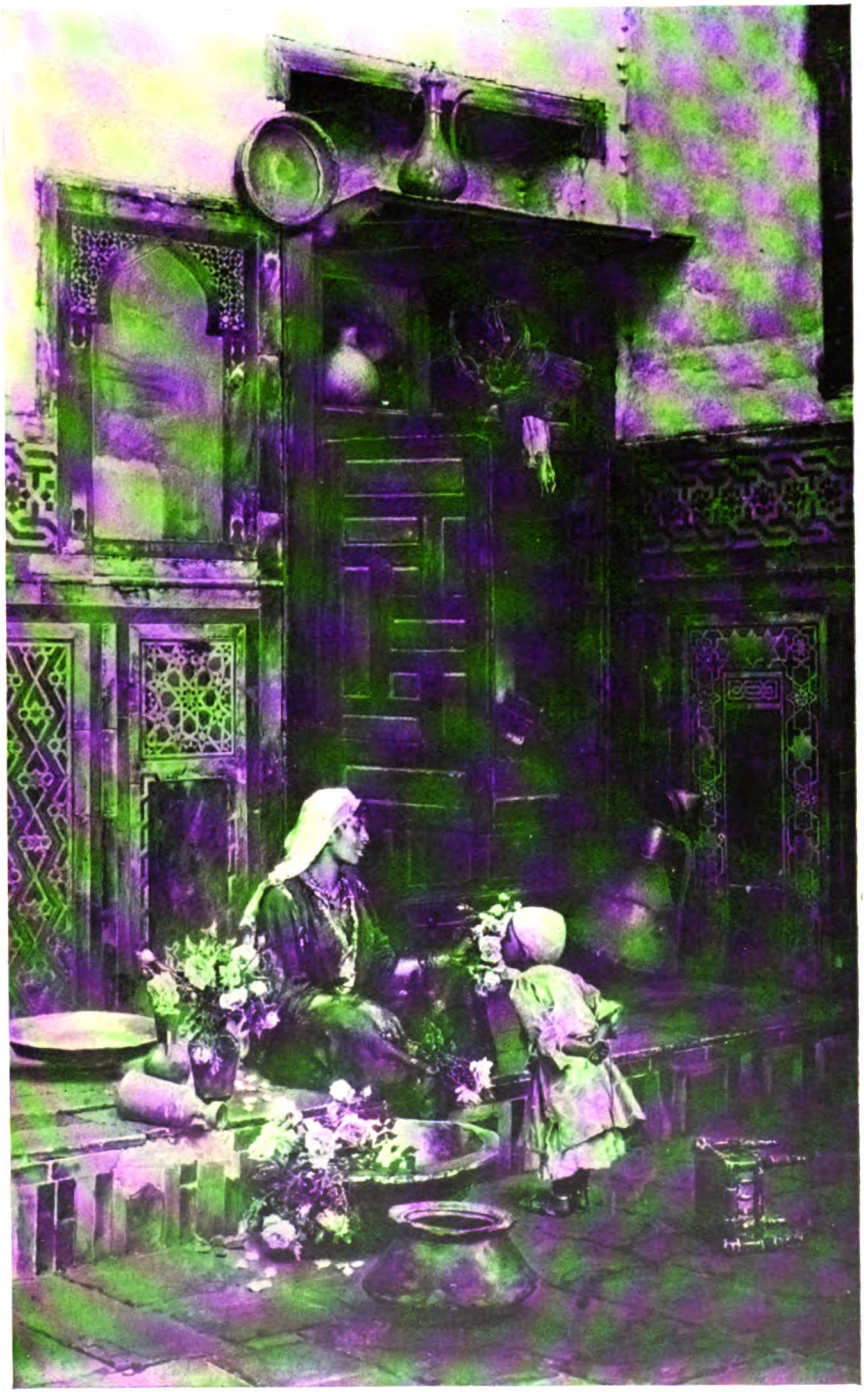

"LET ME SMELL"

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M. Yonine (a high official in the Institution formed by the Europeans in Egypt to protect their national money affairs) of my discovery.

A few days later M. Yonine came to pay me a visit, and presented me with a key of this house, sent by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tigrane Pasha—the owner of the place—with a message that he would allow me to go and stay there.

Enchanted by this permission, I suggested to my wife and daughter and Baroness Natalie Fréedericksz (who were staying with me in Egypt) that they should accompany me to the station at Bédréchine, and from there on foot to the house, to spend the night.

The ladies were delighted and we went off, taking Mahomet, who came to me each year I was in Egypt, to carry the rugs and a basket of provisions. I took my paints, my parasol—which had an iron point—and my revolver.

In the house we found nothing but sofas, a few plates, a telescope, a cigar-box, with only two or three in it, and a lot of French novels. It was clear that for two or three years no one had lived in the three rooms of which the house was composed. I installed myself in the first room, in the second were my wife and daughter, and in the third Natalie. Happily the ladies found some brooms, with which they at once swept away two great ants' nests. Before we went to bed we took the telescope out and admired the eclipse of Venus.

After having sent Mahomet to get provisions for next day, we closed the shutters and lit the candles which we had brought from Cairo; but directly we had done so a quantity of known and unknown insects appeared out of the cracks in the floors and walls and on the ceiling, lizards—transparent ones, with a black spot in the middle of their bodies—making a noise like a coachman does when he wants his horse to go on. By poking at the lizards, who were all together in a corner of the ceiling, I made them fall; we then poured spirits

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of wine on them and lit it; but the situation was becoming painful.

However, we lay down, covering ourselves as best we could with our rugs.

At this moment cries from the second room announced that the ladies there had found three scorpions. Besides that, there was a mouse which prevented my wife from closing her eyes all night.

From the third room Natalie screamed that someone was looking through the shutters at her.

I got up, took my revolver and went round the house, but found no one, so went to bed again. All of a sudden voices near the door met our ears—discussions in the curious guttural Arab vowels, of which naturally we could not understand a word. As we did not know what the voices were talking about, and as we heard from time to time guns going off, we did not have a very happy night.

The next day we took coffee, and I began to paint, when Mahomet arrived with provisions and explained that the people who talked behind the door were there to guard us, and that the shots we heard came from the village to show the Bedouins that the inhabitants were awake and had guns, because very often the Bedouins arrive at most unexpected moments to pillage the villages which are on the confines of the desert.

As I wanted to finish my water-colour, I suggested to the ladies that they should go back to Cairo, but they did not want to leave me alone, preferring to spend another of those dreadful nights with me. So we sent Mahomet back for provisions again.

The next night was rather dreadful, but we were more used to it.

In the morning Mahomet returned with provisions and drinking-water. We did not require to wash the plates in water, because one only had to dip them into the sand when they came out absolutely clean and shining. I again suggested to the ladies that they should return, but they

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preferred to stay. The truth was that in the daytime, when one saw the luxuriant vegetation and the green grass under the palm trees, with the sands stretching away to the horizon, and felt the lightness of the air and the sentiment of peace born of these things, one forgot the torments of a bad night.

So Mahomet went to the town for the third time, and we decided to go next day.

When he returned, we put together all the things we had brought with us, and Mahomet was told to carry them to the station, but at the moment of leaving the house a last shock was reserved for us. A marble slab, with a hole in the middle, served as the necessary sanitary apparatus. From this hole came a snake. Happily it had waited three days before appearing—that was the thought in our minds; but we did not spare it, because in Africa snakes are dangerous, and it was killed.

During my time at Assouan, at the first cataract of the Nile, I was interested by the sight of a column which was on the other side of the cataract on a hill. I took a boat and climbed up the hill with Mahomet and my paints. At last I came to a little plateau where about fifteen young women were sitting in front of some miserable huts, in the middle of which I found my column. At sight of me the women were not the least frightened, but went on talking and working. Two of the women were putting up something into gourds. I told Mahomet to arrange my chair about twenty paces off, and I began to sketch. All of a sudden the women started singing; they sang motifs which it was easy to remember. At the first stop I imitated them as well as I could, to their great joy. So then they began to sing shorter phrases, to which I immediately replied, and that made them very merry.

After some time I got up to look at the column a little more closely. A ruined hut was built around it—for about eight to ten feet up—and in the middle

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of this was a solitary hen, I fancy the only one in the village.

Back in my place I continued my sketch, and the women began their singing again, pausing now and then for me to imitate them.

What interested me was the complete absence of men and animals in this place. Perhaps they were up in the mountains, but I could not get any explanation, for Mahomet did not understand Nubian, and we were now in Nubia.

I began to get very hungry, and tried to explain this to the good women by gestures. They understood, and began to discuss what they had better do to assuage my hunger. At last one of them disappeared, and after a few minutes brought a cake about half an inch thick and ten inches across, of a dirty yellow colour. Its size showed that half of it had been eaten, and there were evident marks where the eater had taken a mouthful, and the shape of his teeth. I took the cake, but eating it seemed to me impossible, or even to bite a little piece. They say that in these countries where locusts are so common, the people mix them up in the flour, and this idea made the cake even less appetising. However, my fear of offending these women—who were now carefully watching me—surmounted my disgust, and I took a big bite into the cake. A cry of joy immediately came from them, and they began to chatter amongst themselves with great volubility, probably at the significance of this attempt. I wondered for a moment if they were trying to poison me, but in any case I gave them back the cake, and as I was getting more and more hungry I told Mahomet to get ready to go.

After having taken off my hat and bowed to the good ladies, who were silent directly they saw I was leaving, I went down the mountain. They all got up and came with me, saying things which I could not understand, but with such sweet and pleasant gestures that I was quite touched. They accompanied me as far as the boat. I

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understood by the expression of their faces and the gesture of their hands that they were asking me to come back. I sincerely regretted that I could not do so, as my movements were ordered by the boat, which was then leaving Assouan to return to Cairo.

I never saw more miserable huts in Egypt, and in spite of that, the women were not the least embittered by their poverty. What a pleasure it would have been to me to have been able to give them some money!

I went back to Cairo. Besides myself there was only one man in the boat, and he had in front of him a table covered with maps, which he was examining with so much interest that I made his acquaintance. He was the celebrated engineer Sir William Willcocks, and the maps represented a dam which he proposed to construct at Assouan.

"But then," I said, "you will inundate Philæ and destroy an antiquarian treasure."

"Yes," he replied, with the expression of an engineer to whom his own art matters, and nothing else.

We discussed at great length the question of the dam, and I remember asking him whether everything of an artistic value could not be carried from Philæ to Cairo and set up there again.

Prince Mourousi told me one day that the Tsarevitch Nicholas, who was making a voyage round the world, would be arriving there with the three aides-de-camp who accompanied him, namely, Prince Kotchubei, Prince Obolensky, and my half-brother. Prince Mourousi also said that he was going to meet the Grand Duke.

"Tell my brother," I said, "that I am here, and that he must come to see me if he wants to have any idea of the beauty of Cairo."

The next day I took my brother[1] into the least inhabited

[1] My half-brother, who was twenty years younger than myself, joined the Czar's Guards, and had a brilliant career. He showed a really great talent for organisation and administration, although his former life had

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and most picturesque corners of the town. I introduced him also to Mrs. Locke King, a charming young woman of thirty who lived at Cairo in a fine house built in the Arabian style, and with a magnificent garden. In spite of her youth and delicate health, she was building, at her own expense, the celebrated hotel Mena House, which is at the foot of the Pyramid of Cheops. She was especially interested in the æsthetic side of her structure, and a Swiss architect, who superintended the building, did his best to put the ideas she suggested to him into a permanent form, with the result that one of the most exquisite habitations that anyone capable of understanding the poetry of the desert can conceive possible was erected.

When he went back to the Grand Duke and told him how he had spent the day and the beautiful things he had seen, the poor Duke said, " Why can't I see these lovely things ? "

I do not remember in which year the Duke of Sutherland arrived at Cairo with his wife—the former Miss Michell (Mrs. Blair)—and an invalid daughter, who was looked after by a very nice lady nurse. The Duke, his wife, and the nurse used to lunch at the table d'hôte, but at the end of the table and a good way from the public.

not prepared him for it. At the age of about forty he was given the arduous task of administering the provinces of the Black Sea, whose population comprised five or six different races. Later on he was the head of the Taurus, and ultimately of the town of Moscow. From 1907 onwards he was at the head of the Imperial Cabinet, whose lands, which were in Siberia, consisted of 64,000,000 acres. The economies he made were so great that the subsidies which the Imperial Cabinet granted to museums, factories, and above all to the theatres of the Court, which during the years before the war had acquired a world-wide reputation, could all be augmented. It must be noted that he worked and fought in Russia at a time when everything was dominated by intrigues, servility, fear of responsibility, and general inertia. During the War he gave up everything for the work of the Red Cross, and was High Commissioner in Warsaw. He now lives in Jugo-Slavia, where he has started a timber business, and hopes to make enough out of it to pay back the people who have provided him with the capital that was necessary, and to retain for himself enough to live on without actually suffering from hunger and privation.

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It was said that all these people would not sit near them because the Duke and his wife had travelled about together for years before they married.

I said to the English people who told me this story, "Well, as they are married now, I cannot see that it concerns you. Why on earth are you afraid of them?"

Probably someone had repeated my remarks to the lady nurse, because one day I met her somewhere and she asked me if I would mind taking my place with them at the end of the table.

"I do not mind in the least," I said.

"Then be charitable and dine with us," she continued; "the Duke is charming and the Duchess very intelligent. They will be delighted."

So at the next meal I went over to them.

The Duke was rather a sleepy individual; the Duchess, an enormous woman with a rather fat face, dressed in a steel-grey frock. Very soon she talked to me about her great estates, which were six or seven in number, and her wish to see a great deal of society. "I want people to come to me—and they will come," she said with plenty of assurance.

"Duchess," I replied, "if you really want to have the world at your door, do not let it know this, because the world is capricious."

After a few conversations of this kind, I said to myself that this lady would have a great many disappointments. She was a woman with a good deal of force of character, but had many illusions on certain sides of life. The excellent lady nurse, who did not in the least understand what she was really like, had a great admiration for her.

One day I met the lady nurse in Cairo. "I want to ask your advice," she said.

"I am at your service."

"To-day the great traveller, Stanley, is coming to see the Duke of Sutherland on his way through Cairo. I am most anxious to ask him to give me a souvenir—

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nothing of any value, but something that has played a part during his long travels across Africa. What could I ask him for ? "

" Do you want a souvenir to put on your table amongst your trinkets ? " I asked.

" No, no—a serious remembrance," she said.

" The most serious souvenir that he could give you, and the one that has mattered most to him in all his wanderings, is his footgear, mademoiselle. Ask him for one of his boots ! "

She did not understand that I was in earnest and thought that I was laughing at her.

I went to the meeting which the Geographical Society of Cairo gave in honour of Stanley, and at which he was made a member. But I remember nothing of it except the figure of Stanley—short, with his grey hair cut like a brush, his eyes alive and piercing—and the horrible guttural sounds in the Egyptian language which a gentleman in a fez emitted during a speech on this occasion.

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CHAPTER XX

When I was once more in Venice in 1890, I saw Duse again. She was terribly miserable about the death of Madame Acton, and realised that she had lost a friend such as she was unlikely to find again her whole life through.

We spoke of her affairs, and I saw that they were not very promising, and was soon convinced that she was quite incapable of managing them. To organise, to look ahead and keep accounts, was not her strong point, and though in her acting there was no exaggeration, it was unfortunately the contrary with regard to her everyday actions and her general opinions, which were only too exaggerated under the influence of a passing impression. Sometimes she had confidence in the director of her company, and at other times she had none. To live, as she did, without knowing what she owed, and with the responsibility of a whole company on her shoulders, was both depressing and worrying. It reacted on her mental state and on her health in the most deplorable manner, taking away her pleasure in life and in her profession. Nothing was more agonising than to observe the anguish of soul this great artist had to endure when it was a question of going into accounts in order to discover whether there was enough to pay the members of her company, and her hotel bills, clothes bills, etc.

"Can there be," I asked her, "a more tragic spectacle than that of actors or actresses who control their own companies, always hoping to make a fortune, but who are only able, by working like niggers, to pay debts which are always recurring, and pursue them to their last day? For heaven's sake don't you be one of this kind of producers.

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Think of to-morrow, and go on saving; for your condition, if you do not succeed better than most of them, will be more tragic than the general run, because of your delicate health and the suffering which it causes you, on the top of your work. It is not a question of educating humanity by means of plays you consider superior to others. The important point is to gain your liberty, and therefore to select those plays which bring in the most profit for you yourself, because with your health it is only at the cost of your body that you manage to work at all. As you are unable to play on an average more than three times a week, your existence as an actress, with a company which depends on you, is not possible in Italy. Even admitting that you arouse great enthusiasm in the public, the number of weekly performances in which you play would be insufficient to cover the deficit produced on the days when the company plays without you.

"Your salvation," I went on, "must come from touring in foreign countries. If you undertook only two each year—say for a period of about two months each—then you would have six to eight months to rest afterwards. Your public would soon be attracted, because it would only be the most cultivated who would come and listen to you, if for no other reason than because of the language. What you must have around you are good producers and secretaries who understand their business and who would deal honestly with you in the conduct of the financial side of the question."

I also tried to make Madame Duse understand the necessity of keeping accounts and looking to the future, as, if she could not do this, it was better not to try to produce herself, but belong to a company run by someone else, as she had done at the beginning of her career.

"Try to keep an account of, and write down, your expenses," I said. "For the present, you must think of nothing but making money, so as to have a reserve. If you fall ill, what on earth will you do with your company?"

"Yes, yes—you are right," she replied, smiling.

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By the nature of that smile I saw that, if left alone without being continually looked after by some devoted friend, she would always remain without a cent, unless her takings were so large that they covered the loss occasioned by letting things slide, or through ignorance and error, by a large percentage.

For this reason I advised her to start her tours by a visit to Russia, convinced that the most cultivated section of Russian society would understand her, and that the mutual gain would be great. She promised me that she would go there in the spring of 1891.

In November 1890 I went again to Egypt, and had no more news of Duse until March 1891, when she began to write to me from Petersburg. I reproduce here in detail her first letter. When one considers that this letter was written under the first impressions of a journey in foreign parts, I feel it has an historic value.

"*Friday, 21st March* 1891.

"MONSIEUR WOLKOFF,

"To thank you for everything!

"Yesterday I arrived and found the apartment all ready for me. However, I promised to be sensible and practical, and the same evening I changed it for another one, simpler and less dear.

"I have arranged that my maid and myself shall be taken for 14 *roubles* a day. Am I not good? You advised me 15 roubles!

"And for that I have two beautiful rooms and they are so warm!—so warm! one must be an Italian to realise the great joy of a room in which one does not continually shiver.

"And then?—Nothing new.

"I shall begin to work on Sunday or Monday. To-day I am still very tired with the journey, but my health is good and my mind is clear,—only I find the world too big, and *life too useless*. Thank you for your goodness to me. You don't know how much of my courage I owe to you,—but I am incapable of writing and can only say, '*thank you for everything*.'

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"I have obeyed your advice and *here* is a book where I shall enter *all my expenses*.

"But if money goes, what is the good of *writing it down*?

"*What is the good* of giving oneself all that trouble?

"Eleonora Duse."

In a letter of the 3rd April that she wrote me in Italian, because French took her too long, she told me that she had suffered from the fear that everything would go badly and that she could not form any opinion as to what would be the result, whereas, on the contrary, success had come with her first performance and "everything is going on so well, so well!"

I translate her letter:

"I would so much like to write to you in detail about the courtesy and welcome I received from Princess Wolkonsky, Countess Lévachoff, and Countess Wolkenstein—but every minute was taken up during the day, and you who gave me an introduction to those ladies must know what courtesy, amiability, and goodness they are capable of."

And then she went on in French:

"One person I want to thank *very very* much is your wife, who sent your son to me. The handsome young man came to salute me, and you will understand that that gave me a great deal of pleasure. I should like to have written at once to his mother, but (I continue in Italian) partly having too much to do, and a little that I have no knowledge or capacity for the ways of the world—prevented my doing it. [Un po' le occupazioni e un po' nessuna docilità o capacità aux règles du monde, m'a empêchée de le faire.]

"Now work is going well, the Press sent a lot of people to the theatre, but it is necessary to vary the répertoire, which is rather monotonous, being composed of Dumas' plays only, while the critics are crying out for Schiller, Goethe, Hugo, etc. Unfortunately they are not in my répertoire. In Italy they have so often told me that the great rôles are not for me, that I have never dared to represent but one character in one of Shakespeare's plays;

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whereas here, on the contrary, my greatest success was with my representation of Cleopatra."

About the same time I received a delightful letter from Princess Wolkonsky:

"If it is true that a mutual hatred often brings people together, still more can it be said of a mutual admiration. You will not be very surprised, I hope, at my writing to you, as it is now a month since I have known Madame Duse. One need not make phrases in describing her; two words are enough. As an artist, she is perfect; as an individual pre-eminent! To see her play is an incredible enjoyment. To know her is unhoped-for riches—and I love her for life! . . . When chance brings us together again we will speak of her."

In summer I went back to Russia for a month, and was happy to be able to help Duse in a few practical matters on which the pecuniary result of the tour depended.

Then I went to Grounowka, an estate of the Bariatinskys, and when Duse arrived at Charkoff, not far from this country house, the whole of the Bariatinsky family and myself went to meet her.

The impression that Duse produced on simple and even uneducated natures was extraordinary. An enormous crowd had gathered at the station, so that when I gave her my arm I could scarcely get her through to her carriage. A silent public stood pressing against the compartment.

All of a sudden a young man, who looked like a workman, managed to push his way through to the steps of the compartment, saying that he wanted to come in. In the carriage there was only Duse sitting down, and I standing up looking out of the window. Seeing that the man was not drunk, I had just time to tell Duse, so that she should not be frightened, and in order to get rid of the intruder more quickly, I told him to come in and say what he wanted.

"I wanted to ask Madame," he said, in a deep,

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mysterious tone, "by what means she takes hold of the people. By the heart, the mind, or the soul?"

"Wait," I said without smiling; "I will ask Madame."

"That is what he asks you," I said in French to her.

"Reply as you like," she said.

"Madame takes hold by all three—by the soul, the mind, and the heart."

The individual went away satisfied and proud at having received a reply.

I went with Duse to Odessa, where she was fêted and received with open arms by the town and by the family of Volodkovitch, and from there to the Austrian frontier.

The faces she saw and the impressions that Duse gathered in that horrible hole which they called Podvolotchisk inspired her with real terror. As to the Austrian Custom-house officers, I really do not know what they might have done to a young woman who looked as if she were trembling with fright—and who spoke neither Russian nor German—if she had not had someone with her.

We crossed the frontier, and I do not remember where I left her.

In January 1892 Duse was playing again at Petersburg, and I saw her there at the most tragic moment of her life.

She had known for some time that her father was ill and that he was alone at Venice. Every now and then she received news of him. One day when we were looking from the window of the hotel on to the Nevsky, we saw a man drawing a coffin along on a little sledge.

"My father is dead!" she cried. "He is dead—now I know it!"

All my assurances availed nothing.

On the same day, and with sorrow in her soul, she had to play.

A little later I heard that Duse was in a terrible state on account of a letter that had come from Italy.

I went to see her at once, and during three days I stayed with her all day long. I had never seen such agony of sorrow; her cries and tears never ceased. She remem-

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bered her childhood, her youth, the modesty and humility of her father—his life of poverty and his passion for her. Often she spoke out aloud without even thinking that anyone was with her, and sometimes it was to me that she told her sufferings.

I was thankful that chance had permitted me to be with her in those terrible moments.

On the 19th of January she wrote a letter to Praga (who had taken charge of the funeral). I read this letter, and I thought it so beautiful that I asked permission to copy it. Amongst a number of wonderful ideas that I discovered in it, here are a few characteristic lines that I have tried to translate :

" I know well that everything has to come to an end—but my father lived such a poverty-stricken life, so isolated, that I alone can remember all the sorrow of the past years.

" My father's ideal, as you say in your letter—that is to say, his hope of my success—was not the strongest link in the affection between my father and myself. He knew better than I did, that in this so-called ' success ' there is so much that is conditional, uncertain, and useless, and his fear of reverses and suffering for me was a continual agony to him.

" No !—on the contrary, I am sure, and I swear it for him, that if I had remained the most stupid person in the world, he would still have been the one who best loved me and would not have cast me away from his heart. He knew how to be my first and my dearest friend—and he knew, in spite of my success, how to remain the most humble and most disinterested of all my friends.

" Where he lived and how he lived proved it !

" The bitter regret that I feel in not having forced him to accept what I offered to him sometimes shows this clearly.

" Well, now, what is the use of speaking of it ? Not to have him any more !—I alone know what I have lost."

Soon after I left for Venice and Duse stayed on in Russia, but I do not remember for how long.

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In the autumn she came to Venice to settle down there. She searched everywhere for suitable lodgings, and at last found them. Then she asked me to help her in connection with some work that was going to be done according to her own plans. This apartment was in the famous Palace of Desdemona on the Grand Canal.

The apartment was charming, but when everything was ready and she had moved there, Duse had a horrible disappointment because she found it uninhabitable. At that time there were no steam-boats on the Canal and the different parties of singers were allowed to go wherever they liked in front of the hotels and to sing during the whole evening. This custom was only abolished after the introduction of the steam-boats.

The Palace of Desdemona is next the Grand Hotel, and poor Duse had to listen to all the songs sung for the benefit of the visitors, which continued until about eleven o'clock at night.

By some mischance, while we were attending to the alterations in the apartment, we were never there in the evening. It was impossible for anyone to live there, let alone a person as nervous as Duse, so the only thing to do was to get rid of the place, leaving the very pretty woodwork which had just been finished. Duse was frightfully disappointed, as she generally was when anything turned out badly, so to console her I suggested an apartment in my own house. As my children had left for Russia, I was able to arrange to let her an apartment which had not only a door quite separate from ours, but which even opened into another street.

Duse moved into this and lived there for three years, until the time when she left Venice to settle at Settignano.

During these three years she was very active indeed, and toured in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Austria, then back into Germany. These tours were always a great success from the artistic point of view, but often showed terrible losses on the financial side, either because of the directors or the

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incapacity of the producers. One can hardly imagine the harm such people can do through ignorance or inability to look forward.

Madame Duse kept me posted as to her movements, often writing to me and sending me accounts of her receipts and copies of her contracts with the impresarios and the theatres. Her nerves were in such a bad way that sometimes—when requiring my advice—she would send me three or four telegrams a day. She felt so isolated, with no one near her, in these far-off countries. It was different in Russia, where the ladies of good society, with that natural hospitality so common amongst Russians, were delighted to help her and were proud of her friendship. Happily, however, a charming young lady, Miss Alma Tadema, accompanied Duse during part of her German tour, showing incredible devotion.

The following is a letter Miss Alma Tadema wrote to me from Stuttgart:

"*6th November* 1894.

". . . The tour began so badly that Madame Duse very nearly lost courage—or rather the hope of good business from the commencement. The public is slow, and the advertisements were all made too late. A whole week has gone by and there has only been one performance, with bad takings; the one for this evening does not promise much better. We lost two matinées at Nuremberg and at Munich because they were advertised too late. I tell Madame that we shall probably do better at Frankfurt; but up to now we have had nothing but losses. The company costs a thousand francs a day, so that up to the present even the expenses are not paid. . . . De Sanctis (jeune premier) seems to be quite impossible. He is too silly, says Madame, and always wants to put himself forward. He played in the third act without any waistcoat—just anyhow, as if he was playing Turiddu.

"Madame is plucky, but very cast down. She asks me to tell you everything. . . ."

From Dresden, Miss Tadema wrote that their secretary, Hartlieb, had arranged a performance at Magdeburg,

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declaring that the journey only took two hours, and that the directors of the theatre had agreed to give Madame the complete takings, that is to say, 3,500 to 4,000 marks, only reserving 500 for themselves. Instead of that the journey took four and a half hours and the directors of the theatre would not abide by their conditions.

It was now Madame's turn to continue:

"The poor man was engaged by Count Drechsel[1] just to take the receipts, instead of which they made him work in all sorts of ways, even obliging him to play the piano behind the scenes in *La Dame aux Camélias*. The truth is, we want a man who can be master of the situation, who knows how to look at things in general and not only in detail. One must be prepared to look a long way ahead, because the public must be humoured. In this tour no one ever thought of the public, and the public is therefore not spending its money.

"In Germany there is a time one must always avoid, and that is the Christmas season. Everyone is taken up with that idiotic Christmas tree! I think a business man who has not wide views is a very dangerous person to put at the head of anything. Hartlieb is excellent at doing what he is told and for taking receipts, but not at directing a tour, nor is he of any help in negotiating. Yesterday the poor man was *malate*, but I do not think it was his fault. He believed in the word of these people and had arranged everything verbally, but this evening nobody would admit either that he had any rights or allow him to take the receipts, tell him their amount, or let him have an interview with the director, who shut himself up when he wanted to see him. They deny all Hartlieb's statements, saying that they did not mention 3,500 marks or 4,000 as a *sine qua non* of my journey.

"The poor man was *paff*—he looked like a General in retreat in 1812, coming back from Moscow. He roared right and left, as if he were rallying a disorganised army.

"On the top of this, after the performance was ended, the company had to leave me and disperse. Then there were the luggage, tickets, trains, money to pay out, etc.,

[1] Husband of the charming Countess Sophie Drechsel, with whom Duse had made friends.

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and at last he put his head in his hands—as if it was going to burst—and kept saying, 'C'est très tur [dur]; ce n'est pas *siuste* ! '

"The company left at midnight—blessings without an end from these unhappy people, who said they wanted to stay with me all their life. Ah, *sapristi !* that would be cheerful. I blessed them also—and especially for the pleasure of never seeing them again.

"The next day the Chénéral [Général] arrived—his face has something so honourable about it. I felt as sorry for him as for a beaten dog, and I longed to say to him, 'Yes, yes—I know what you want to say——' He wanted, like a good soldier, to make a report in full of his useless attempts. My head went round.

"He shrieked, 'Et alors, matame, siai fait ceci—et alors, matame, siai fait cela——"

"He pronounced *étalor* just as if it was all one word, and always with a crescendo of his voice, vibrating, and nearly breaking the windows—like a soldier, as if *he* was a corporal shouting 'Present arms ! ' . . .

"To make a long story short, he wanted to insult the head of the theatre and then go to the Mayor to swear that they had deceived him. He stood with the proud air of a Roman Emperor.

"'I swear'—here he lifted his hand—'I swear that they have deceived me.' Scie sciure qu'on m'a trompé (et moi drombé)—ouf !—à se tordre."

Mademoiselle Alma Tadema wrote to me from Berlin :

"17*th December* 1894.

"Madame came on Thursday. She was horribly tired, having had, as you know, a great many worries at Hamburg, but although tired she was calm and physically well. I went with her to the theatre on Saturday and was sometimes in a box and sometimes behind the scenes. She played in *La Dame aux Camélias* with a splendid swing and a great radiance of beauty.

"She has got over her reverses at Hamburg, Bremen, and Breslau. . . . I am writing this to you because I am afraid *she* only writes to you when she is in one of her crises and at moments of great difficulty, so that you do not realise her normal state. During the whole of this

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tour she has behaved with a calm and patience much greater than anything she showed in London. I was really surprised—and also with her patience with the secretary and the rareness of her moments of despair, which were so frequent before and so painful to see."

These two ladies being young and inexperienced, the scenes that occurred were often very trying. For example, Miss Alma Tadema wrote to me from Amsterdam in 1895:

"Madame had just finished her performance and was to go to Brussels, when the secretary of the troupe, Hartlieb, suggested to her that she should give a performance at Bremen, on their way through, where he had already spoken of the affair to the directorate of the theatre.

"Trusting to the statement of Hartlieb that Amsterdam was only eight hours' journey from Bremen, we accepted the proposition. Whilst we were waiting, Schürmann, the impresario, came to tell me that he regretted that Madame should have undertaken this journey from Amsterdam to Bremen, because it took fifteen hours.

"All this argument took place at the theatre, during rehearsal. . . . I sent for Hartlieb, but he persisted in his eight hours—Schürmann persisted in his fifteen. The first offered to wager several thousand florins, upon which the other threw several thousand florin notes on the table, whereupon Hartlieb turned his back.

"After rehearsal, Madame and I asked the portier of the hotel the distance to Bremen. He replied that neither was right, and that the journey from Amsterdam to Bremen took twelve hours.

"Madame would never have consented to make this excursion if she had known the journey took more than eight hours. It is enough for one of these counsellors to state a certain thing, for the other to contradict it. Both of them want to prove to Madame the incompetence and malice of the other, and it is impossible to arrive at the truth. . . ."

But this man, Hartlieb, had already deceived them the year before. Was it not possible just to look up the

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ELEONORA DUSE

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journey in a Bradshaw, or even to ask the porter of the hotel, so as not to have any mistake about it? And no doubt the conditions with the impresari could have been better arranged, and the secretary of the company might have been better chosen. All the same, I was thankful to note that Madame Duse began to stand fatigue and annoyance of every kind better.

Also I was pleased to hear that up to 1895—that is to say, after four years—she had been able to put by nearly 400,000 francs, or about £16,000. And all this time her reputation was growing with the public in these countries, where, her performances happening rarely, she was immensely asked for and waited for with enthusiasm. If in the first years, in spite of the great errors committed by all those who had to do with the financial side of her affairs, she managed not to have a deficiency but to put by so considerable a sum of money, one could look forward to the hope that several years' work would bring her in a sufficiently important sum for her to be free to go on with her work or discontinue it, as she preferred; and this work could be done with the least fatigue possible, only occupying a few months of the year and allowing the great artist to continue her relations with the friends that she had made.

In 1892 I painted her portrait. Anxious above all to reproduce the unique expression of her eyes, I had any amount of worry before I could invent a technique which would enable me to attain the object I had in view. It was only by putting aside all ambition of trying to create an impression through cleverness of treatment or brilliancy of brushwork that I managed to achieve anything. The method consisted in preparing a canvas by rubbing the surface with a raw potato cut in two. This done, the water-colour adheres to the canvas, and the colours mingle with extreme facility and delicacy. This portrait was photographed by Braun in Paris and had a sale for several years. Towards 1905 I stopped the sale and had the negative destroyed. I have since heard that

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two works, one in England and one in Germany, are being published, in which reproductions of this portrait are printed. As the publishers have not thought it necessary to ask my permission, not to speak of the fact that the reproductions are defective, I am bringing an action against them.

In 1898 Madame Duse joined us in Egypt. With my wife, my daughter, and myself, she made an excursion in a dahabieh that I had hired to go up the Nile.

Her indifference to the beauties of nature struck me on this occasion. The most beautiful sunsets left her cold. The most splendid combinations of architectural lines, in mosques or in tombs, interested her very little, and the sight of the pyramids and the Sphinx conveyed nothing to her imagination.

We had already noticed her want of interest in nature when she was with us at Grindelwald in Switzerland, but we were astonished that this indifference should go so far. The truth is that the human soul absorbed all her thoughts, and if she was interested in any phenomena it was only because it was possible to associate them with some fact in connection with that soul. The wonders of ancient Egypt were too remote for her mind to be impressed by them. On the other hand, she liked to look at the very banal mountain behind Asolo, which she admired because she associated with it the idea of the famous Grappa.[1]

Towards the end of 1895 Duse changed her mind. She no longer wanted to make tours in Europe, just at the moment when it would have brought her the greatest benefit—firstly, because her reputation was made, and, secondly, because they might have arranged the performances better, and, thirdly, because, compared with previous years, her health began to improve. So she went to stay at Settignano and all her artistic ideas concentrated on new plays, in which, according to the accounts of Matilde Serao, she did not have much success in Italy.

[1] A stronghold celebrated for the struggles which the Italians went through to defend it.

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To gain her livelihood she had every now and then to make a tour—but it was too late. Her best years were passed without bringing her any pecuniary benefit.

I had hoped that if she went on working another eight years, at the age of forty-five she might have liberated herself completely from the heavy burden of dragging a company about with all the attendant risks and perils. She would certainly have made two million francs and could have settled down where she liked, and built a house for herself, and even a little theatre that would have amused her, if only to give advice to those who might ask for it. There was already a question of buying an estate on the borders of a Swiss lake, with a magnificent view, in order to build a house with a lovely garden where her friends could have come to her in the summer. She would have been free to pass the winter in Italy, occupying herself in theatrical matters as an amateur and without any obligation or responsibility. There would have been at last in the history of the theatre—if only for once—an actress who had become mistress of the situation, enjoying her life without depending always on the mob, giving herself the luxury of living as other women live—and who more than Duse was worthy of such an existence? "As an artist, she is perfection; as an individual pre-eminent," wrote a great lady, who was not often prodigal of her compliments.

If one wishes to understand the reason of the profound impression which this artist produced on the most cultivated public, one must realise that it was not only because of the life with which she managed to endow the personages that she represented, but also because of the sympathy that her own personality evoked.

Through her countenance one could see a woman who one knew was fine and sensitive. Her rich and delicate soul identified itself with the soul of every human type, and incarnated itself in that soul to such a degree that the spectator no longer saw the actress or the theatre. When she represented a character she lived for three or four

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hours in the soul of that person, and this to such an extent that details which did not correspond with the idea that she conceived of her rôle, even to small questions of dress, often upset her. Her maid having forgotten one day to bring to the theatre the blue silk stockings that she always wore in *La Dame aux Camélias*, she was quite seriously affected.

The following little story, which she told me one day, is an example of her extreme sensibility.

Wanting to soften Turridu, when playing the rôle of Santuzza, she meant to caress his hand; but this scene —which she felt so natural—was a failure because she could not get over her aversion for the hairy hand of the actor who was playing the part.

Those slight exaggerations of voice or gesture, which even the greatest actors do not disdain in order to produce a scenic effect, were completely unknown to Duse. We notice on the first page of the excellent book on her by M. Schneider a few lines which express very well the impression that she made on a cultivated spectator.

"It was in *The Lady of the Camélias*.

"My eyes and my ears were still vibrating with the image and voice of the great Sarah. I imagined that no interpreter could surpass her in a rôle which had become almost mythical, so my surprise was extreme when, under the traits of the Italian artist, the physiognomy of Marguerite Gautier appeared to me surrounded by a poetry quite as intense but showing a new light, and with an accent of simple truth which made her altogether more moving and more near to us."

More of a woman and less of an actress, we should probably say.

As I have already mentioned, one of the characteristic traits of her nature was the feebleness of her imagination. She had a great intelligence, a sensibility that was almost a disease, but very little imagination. Incapable of taking in at once all the pros and cons when it was a

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question of making a decision, she was the slave of passing impressions.

"Why should one write down one's expenses?" she wrote in her first letter from Petersburg.

She said that because her imagination was not alive enough for her to form an idea of the misery to which any enterprise would expose those who do not keep accounts or know how to keep them.

It seems to me, however, that this want of imagination in an actor or actress is far from being injurious to their profession, and it is possible that the natural way of representing the lives of others may depend on this. It is not in making his imagination work that the actor manages to give to each of his words the intonation and necessary gesture (which are always of course indicated by the author); it is through his feeling that he does it. And to be in a condition to do this, it is not sufficient to possess a nature capable of feeling and expressing different states of the soul; it is necessary that all these states—from the greatest sufferings to the greatest joys—shall produce in his own nature physical reactions which he can convey to the eye and ear of the spectator.

It is in the manner of reproducing these states of the soul that the great art of the actor consists. How can his imagination contribute to the perceptions of these relations? An excess of imagination can only do harm, where simple sentiment, guided by the idea which the actor forms for himself of the personality that he represents, ought to be sufficient. His idea should be clear and precise, even if it is false.

Do not let us forget that it is not by his conception of the part that the qualities of his acting must be judged. It is not by the way in which they understand the type of Marguerite Gautier that the difference between the impression produced by Sarah Bernhardt and Duse depends, but in the way in which each one knows how to be silent, or speak, or express joy, sadness, sorrow. The more their manner seems to us true, the more it impresses

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us; and the more it is *felt* and not *played*, the greater the appearance of truth.

And is it not just the want of imagination which enables the actor to concentrate, when it is necessary, all his attention on what applies to a given moment, and to discover the means that are the best adapted to make this moment comprehensible to the soul of the spectator? A rich imagination would probably make the actor hesitate in the choice of these means, and his playing would therefore become less spontaneous and less effective.

It was not imagination which led Duse to invent the gesture which the younger Dumas so admired, and which he speaks of in *The Princess of Baghdad* (1892 edition):

"After having said to her husband: 'I am innocent—I swear this to you,' Lionnette, seeing him still incredulous, rises and puts her hand on her son's head, and says for the third time: 'I swear it!' This noble and convincing movement was not used in Paris—neither Mademoiselle Croisette nor myself had thought of it; but it was necessary that that third 'I swear it' should be irrefutable. Intonation by itself, however poignant, was not sufficient. It was Duse, the great actress who is carrying Vienna off its feet at the moment, who had this wonderful inspiration when she created the part at Rome. I introduce it into my final edition, but I acknowledge to whom the honour and merit are due. It is a pity for our French drama that this incomparable artist is not a Frenchwoman."

When I asked Duse how she had thought of this scene, she answered that the idea had come to her spontaneously. Without doubt imagination is necessary to represent a type that is generally accepted by convention. In such cases only imagination can be the guide and can indicate the way to show best the peculiarities of the part, and that actor will succeed best who, in counterfeiting it, can efface his own personality most. But Duse was without this gift, and far from being merged in the personages of her repertory, it was they who disappeared in her. It is probable that she could not have given to Schiller's Mary

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Stuart the presence and the majesty conventionally associated with a Queen; but in Shakespeare's Cleopatra, where the royal type, thanks to the distance of time, can only be very slightly defined, she had great success. On the contrary, in *The Lady from the Sea*, where she did not succeed in imitating an eccentric Norwegian of the middle classes, the piece became totally incomprehensible.

Let me here express an opinion, which is entirely personal, but is based on a hundred observations I have made during my life.

The head of a person who has a great imagination generally shows a high forehead, or at least a sensible elevation of that part of the frontal bone which is covered by hair and in consequence invisible. It is common knowledge that a painter, producing the portrait of a poet, would never give him a low forehead and a flat head. On the other hand, all great actors and actresses have low foreheads and flat heads under their hair. I have never met an exception to this rule in all the heads of the great actors and actresses I have had the chance of observing with attention. Emma Grammatica and Novelli are the most remarkable examples of this. . . . Duse had a beautiful forehead—not high—with magnificent hair which grew admirably, but under the hair her head was flat.[1]

The absence of a rich imagination amongst actors and actresses explains the singular fact that, in spite of their lives being passed in representing men and women in the most varied situations, this does not often develop in them the capacity for writing for the theatre.

Their intelligence is sufficient to understand an already created type, and their feeling is enough to reproduce it, but in spite of the innumerable types that they know intimately, their imagination is not sufficiently strong to create new ones.

Duse had developed her taste in the choice of the things with which her profession forced her to live from

[1] One has only to mention Sarah Bernhardt, Mounet Sully, and Irving.

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early youth, such as the selection of her toilette and arrangement of different scenes. Her ideas of beauty were due to reasons of objective value—and the selection of these reasons often interested her. But outside this kind of appreciation, all other matters of taste were born in her from ideas which changed according to her state of mind.

I did not have any more news of Duse after the end of 1896, and did not seek for any, realising that it would only be painful. On the 5th of May, 1909, however, Count Pasolini wrote to me from Rome:

"My wife and her sister Countess Suardi went this evening to hear Duse, who has been here for several days. My wife saw her and thought her as charming as ever, but she is disgusted with the brutality of the Italian public. She expects, and asks for, criticism—but this species of low persecution, this orgy of mockery and demolition, is too much for her. It is revolting."

I must confess that I would never have believed it could have gone so far. Such was the reception of this great artist in her own country, after she gave up her performances abroad.

In 1912, I received from Madame Duse the following letter, of which I have not changed a word.

"One prayer.

"That which I ask is *like a prayer*. But you may reply, '*No*'—my heart will not be any the sadder.

"This is the question. I want to *remake* my home—my house at *Venice*. I spent June and July there and I hunted everywhere. Nothing attracted me. None of the new houses that I saw—none; only a dear little house which is on the right of the *Academy* [the house of Madame Acton] and the dear house *up high*, yours at San Gregorio. I passed by there in the evening. It was peaceful and far from everything and everybody.

"I ask you something to which you must reply with kindness, even if it is *No*.

"I ask you to let me rent rooms again there *up at the top* in your house.

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"Neither you, nor Vera—nor any of your people—are ever at Venice. Why? Why such forgetfulness?

"Reply only a *No*, or else a kind word."

Here she is also carried away by the impressions of the moment. "I passed by there in the evening. It was peaceful and far from everything and everybody," she wrote. She had not enough imagination to appreciate the qualities and recognise the deficiencies of the apartment at their just value. She only judged it under the impression of peace which she felt on finding herself near the house. If by chance there had been noises in the street at the moment when she passed, she would not have thought of the place.

This letter made me very unhappy. It showed me through what sorrows this beautiful soul must have passed before making up her mind to address such a prayer to me.

At this time (1912) she must have been about fifty-three years of age, and yet she was not able to consider herself free—or at least sufficiently free to be no longer obliged to drag her poor body through the world, at the mercy of the speculation of every kind of producer.

It was with the greatest regret that I had to reply to this letter that the apartment of which she spoke no longer existed, and that the staircase with a separate entrance—which had been there previously—had been demolished to enlarge the drawing-room on the first floor.

In 1918 I saw Duse again at Florence. When I was very ill, she wrote to me:

"It is good to see each other again and to understand life better.

"Remember that you have always my tender and sincere friendship."

Towards 1920 she came to see us at Venice and asked me to go to Asolo, where she wanted to show me her house.

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She came again to us before going to Turin, and also during her performances at Venice.

Monsieur Schneider gives a short account of the excellent article of Madame Matilde Serao on the manner in which Duse was treated in Italy.

"Scepticism, indifference, mockery! What opposition of all kinds there was in her path!

"Sometimes giving way to rancour and anger, she fled to foreign parts, where they always received her with a growing enthusiasm. When she came back, they said to each other that perhaps this Duse whom everybody made such a fuss about on the other side of the frontier was, after all, a great artist, and because of national vanity they applauded her; but after a few performances the opposition soon began again."

This description is absolutely true, but it does not explain why Duse was so little appreciated in her own country. If the public applauded her merely from national vanity, that proves that the Italians had formed an entirely different opinion about her playing and her art from that which prevailed in all foreign countries. The admiration of the Italian public being merely pretended, it was natural that after a few performances the opposition should soon begin again. That is the whole point; the rest is a detail.

The mass of the Italian public did not understand her, did not admire her, and did not respect her, because in no other country in the world does the theatrical crowd —which is incapable of recognising fine qualities—dominate the opinion of the more cultivated public as it does in Italy.

In the rest of Europe, in serious matters the public is more modest and bows before the opinions of more educated people. Besides which, as regards performances in a language which it does not understand, the mass of the public does not count. But, apart from that, the actors and actresses also contribute to the formation of opinion,

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and having no reason for being jealous, spread abroad their admiration and enthusiasm.

Monsieur Schneider writes, amongst other things:

"Those of her compatriots who were so justly proud of her from the national point of view should have considered that it was the duty of people who were really aware of such an honour to prove their feelings by making a sacrifice. But they did not give the unhappy genius the only help which would have been any good, i.e. a theatre for herself."

But if one remembers the kind of public which has enough power in Italy to impose its will on the rest of the people, what guarantee could one have that the talents of Duse would have been understood and recognised, even had they given her a theatre of her own?

"They tell us," continued M. Schneider, "that to construct something solid and stable was practically impossible when it came to dealing with a creature who had so terribly nervous a disposition. Is not this nervousness so closely bound up with the greatness of the woman and the artist that one may look upon it as one of the essential sources of her genius? One ought to see, not a sort of defect, but a painful superiority before which one can only bow with emotion."

Yes, it is true that one must bow before this quality. One must realise the essential sources of her genius—but one cannot be expected to direct it into enterprises where this kind of painful superiority could only be harmful.

I myself am certain that if they had given Duse a theatre for herself, with a definite goal, she would soon have become the most unhappy of women, because no one had a more intense feeling of responsibility. The success of the enterprise would have depended on a number of problematical factors, and Duse would have suffered at each fiasco. I feel sure that fiascos would inevitably have happened, especially if she had continued to attribute a great artistic value to *The Lady from the Sea*, for of all

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the pieces in which I saw her play, this was certainly the one where the type she represented was the least successful. She gave one the impression, not of a Norwegian, but of an Italian lady surrounded by Norwegian bourgeois.

I saw her in this piece at Venice, and as I knew that she wanted to hear my opinion about her performance, this is what I wrote to her:

"My dear Friend,

"It is useless to tell you how much I admired you yesterday evening. You know my opinion of the artistic and physical qualities of your exceptional nature. If any change has happened in the twenty-five years I have seen you on the 'boards,' it is, if anything, to your advantage. Your voice is sweeter, your lines are more supple, your gestures more varied—and above all that, your face is no less charming, and your appearance from every point of view is as ideal,—I would like to say, sublime.[1]

"I hope that you will always keep the treasures which nature has showered upon you, and that you will sometimes think of your old friend,

"A. Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff."

I did not write anything about the play.

To that, she replied:

"Thank you, dear friend.

"Everything is well [bien].

"And *everything* is so sad.

"Yours from my heart,

"Eleonora Duse."

It was not only sad, but tragic! Here is a creature, unique in the world, who has given unforgettable pleasure to millions of individuals—because it is by millions one must number them—and who has done it for thirty years and always to the destruction of her delicate health, and who has arrived at the age of sixty without having the means of arranging a home for herself and is obliged, at the risk of her very life, to start working again. These

[1] She now made up a little.

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are the facts. It was a tragedy caused by the nature of her soul, which was so closely bound up with the greatness of the woman and the artist, and which was the essential factor of her genius. Before such a tragedy one can only be silent.

"Because she fought for D'Annunzio's plays," writes Matilde Serao, they attacked her pitilessly in every town in the kingdom.

But if she did so, it was because her artist's soul made it necessary.

The same tendencies made her extravagant. She liked to buy and to give, always without keeping accounts. Easily won by passing impressions and, because of that, always nervous, she ended by settling at Asolo. Again, it was her artist-soul which guided her. Existence at Rome in a wretched little apartment would not have contented her. She had managed to arrange a home for herself, and only required money to live there in freedom—and she was beginning to find this. Then came death. . . . Death is a chance, and chance does not study geography!

I saw Duse the last time she passed through Paris, when she came from Italy. She looked like a dying woman, but in London she seemed to recover.

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CHAPTER XXI

If at Venice my life was passed almost entirely amongst foreigners, at Florence, Ravenna, and at Rome I had the pleasure of making excellent friends amongst the Italian families, and very often I left Venice to enjoy some time in their company.

At Florence I knew well, and admired very much, Countess Angelica Rasponi, a woman of remarkable intelligence and extraordinary artistic culture, with a very fine taste in decoration—and the mother of three children. She lived in her villa Font'all'erta, just outside Florence. I knew Countess Rasponi first when her boys were still quite children and her daughter a young lady of seventeen. Count Rasponi occupied himself especially with agriculture, and was often away seeing to his estates. As for the Countess, she was a real Florentine, who adored her Font'all'erta, and stayed there.

Everything she undertook she did with enthusiasm. She had been remarkably beautiful, but I only knew her disfigured. A big dog, which was standing up with its paws against the shoulders of its master, turned upon her as she came up to him, and bit her horribly in the face. The teeth of the dog had left big holes in different parts of her face, which made her absolutely terrifying for those who saw her for the first time. Little by little these wounds became less deep and in time they almost disappeared. Those who loved and admired her as I did had no time to pay attention to this detail, for they were so delighted by her lucid mind and charmed by her soul's intensity.

At the top of a little mountain, completely covered with verdure and olive trees, there is a large and beautiful house,

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built at the end of the seventeenth century, with a vast and splendid loggia. A long shady walk, with roses on each side, goes zigzag up the hill towards the house, transforming itself when it reaches the level of the house into a beautiful cypress alley. Lovely trees surround the house, and there are views showing Florence at its feet, on one side, and on the other Fiesole, dominating Font'all'erta.

The hospitality of the mistress of this enchanting place was such that I often remained a week or two without noticing how the time passed. However, once I had to leave in a hurry, not to say escape.

One evening, at dinner, besides the children and myself, there was a certain gentleman to whom we were trying to describe a third person. The Countess praised this person and I did the contrary. Little by little the discussion became so acute that, on rising from the table, Countess Rasponi said to me, "Wolkoff, we must separate."

Her look, her expression, and the force of feeling which made her behave like this was so splendid, so absolutely Italian, that, although upset by the idea of being sent away, I was happy to have seen her beautiful nature in this state of exaltation.

"Good-bye, Countess," I said—and I went away from the room, telling the servants to pack my bag and get me a conveyance to go to the station. I left without seeing the Countess again.

It was only a year later, when passing through Florence to go to Rome, I telephoned to Font'all'erta for news of her.

Rezia, her daughter, who was not yet married, replied, begging me to come to Font'all'erta, for her mother would be very chagrined to know that I had been to Florence without having come to see her.

A few hours later I saw her in the town. "You were right," she said, giving me her hand, and alluding to the incident of the previous year.

"I assure you, Countess," I said, "that the pleasure of

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seeing you as I saw you then softened the sadness of leaving you."

One day when I was going through Florence, and dining at the Hôtel Baglioni, I met some Russian friends who were dining in the same room. They described their impressions to me, which consisted of tiring visits to different museums and churches and their experiences in different hotels.

"You are," I said, "like all Russians. You never know the people of the countries that you visit, and always live amongst your compatriots. Would you like to see how the cultivated Italians live in Italy?"

"There is nothing we should like better," they answered.

I telephoned to Font'all'erta and asked Countess Rasponi if I might bring up four Russian friends to see how a distinguished Italian lived in her own house.

She naturally gave me permission, and I drove my little company of friends up to Font'all'erta.

These Russians afterwards confessed to me that this visit had left behind the most agreeable of all their impressions of Italy. My friends were Sabouroff, with his wife, Scheremetieff, the Princess Gortchakoff, and General Gadon.

Countess Rasponi's only daughter, Lucrezia, did not resemble her mother in temperament. She had a judicious and contemplative nature, which tried to examine before judging and deciding, but her convictions, once acquired, became fixed and precise, although always dominated by the sentiments of compassion and goodness. Without being beautiful, she was pretty, with an expression which displayed the sweetness and nobleness of her soul. When about twenty, she married the son of Prince Corsini of Florence, and went to live with him in the great Corsini Palace on the banks of the Arno. Not having seen her for several years, I wrote to her one day to ask her if I should call her "Marquise"—which was her real title as long as her father-in-law or elder brother-in-law was alive—or "Donna Lucrezia." She answered, "You must call me 'Rezia.'"

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At Ravenna there were other Rasponis whom I knew very well. These were two sisters and a brother, to whom the palace which used to belong to Count Guiccioli, and was made famous by Byron, belonged; and not far from Ravenna, at Savignano di Romagna, they had a property consisting of a large house and a most beautiful park. This family belonged to the Rasponi Bonapartes, descendants of Murat. Their mother was a Princess Ghika, a Rumanian. The eldest daughter, Louise, went every year for two months to Paris, to Princess Mathilde Bonaparte, her aunt. There was a great difference in age between the two sisters. I spent entire weeks with them on this property, where the house was run by old servants such as one no longer finds.

My experience is that Italian families who live in the country for the greater part of the year have traits of character very similar to those of Russian families—the same hospitality, the same goodness of heart, the same compassion for less fortunate people around them, and the same wish to come to their help.

The younger of the two sisters, Eugénie, who was called Nie, was very beautiful and had a great and original talent for painting. She made wonderful etchings of flowers, whose formation she understood so well that with a few little bits of a plant she could always make a picture.

One day, when leaving Venice, the two sisters arrived at the station half an hour too soon. I proposed to Nie that we should take advantage of the half-hour we had in hand to see some sights which were near the station, and which she had not yet seen.

First of all, there was the Church of the Scalzi, with its Tiepolo, destroyed by the Germans in the War; also two beautiful wells in the courtyards of two palaces.

We had to hurry, and we ran laughing along. Having been into the church, we then ran to see first one and then the other—then we ran back to the station. An old woman of the people, who was standing quietly waiting, and before whom we had passed several times, looked at

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us attentively. Suddenly, with an expression of sorrow and great conviction, she said, "Two distraught souls!"

Always, after this, I called Nie "My distraught soul."

The only brother of these two sisters, Giulio Rasponi, was a man with a good deal of originality. Although he had strong aristocratic convictions, he knew well—thanks to his great tact—how to adapt his dealings with the inhabitants of Settignano, who were mostly Socialists or Communists, so that they always got on perfectly well together.

He was naturally lazy, and declared to the Conservative Party, who, in spite of great difficulty, had managed to elect him as a Deputy, that he would never put his foot inside Parliament. Nobody believed him at the time, but he kept his word!

Although generally having nothing to do, he had a good head for affairs, and all the agricultural improvements that he recommended to his agent or his sisters succeeded very well.

He also had a great deal of natural humour and often said witty things. One day, during the election of a young Italian Count to a club, Mr. Levi, a member of the club, said several things which were not very flattering about his family.

"All of us," said Rasponi, "have not the honour—like you—to be cousins of the Madonna."

At Ravenna there was another Countess Rasponi—the celebrated "Gugù." I must explain in what her celebrity consisted.

One day I found in the drawing-room of Countess Pasolini in Rome an album consisting of the most marvellous coloured designs representing little groups of children of about the age of four or under, generally in company with a goose. In the album there were about sixty little designs on tiny pieces of paper about three or four inches square. I asked the name of the artist.

"It is the young Countess Augusta Rasponi," answered my hostess, "who loves drawing quite little children, in

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which she expresses her own joy, sorrow, disappointment, hope, etc.—all the disposition of soul which she feels towards the people whom she loves best."

I inquired if Augusta Rasponi was rich.

"No," said Countess Pasolini; "she lives miserably and shivers all the winter."

One day this little Countess came to Rome, to the Pasolinis', and I made her acquaintance. She was a real artist who adored children, cats, and geese, and thoroughly understood them. She imagined herself a goose, and signed her drawings with the name of "Gugù," always representing herself as a goose when she wanted to put herself into any of her drawings.

"Give me these drawings," I said one day to the Countess. "Take the little pictures out of the album, because I want to send them to London—I intend to get thirty shillings apiece for them!"

So I sent them with a letter to the Director of the Fine Arts Society, telling him that I felt that they would recognise their value from the point of view of art, and that they must get someone to write a little story which the pictures could illustrate; but that in any case he must send the value of the sixty drawings, which I thought were worth about 30*s*. each, to Ravenna—to the address of Countess Augusta Rasponi.

Five days later Augusta Rasponi received nearly £200. One can picture the excitement that the arrival of this sum produced in a little town like Ravenna where everyone knew his neighbour; but the truth was, no one had the faintest conception of the artistic value of the designs of this little Countess. They even thought that this amount had only been paid her because of my patronage. I had the greatest trouble to explain to the public that "Gugù" did not in the least need my protection, because, of her type—a small type, I admit—she was the greatest artist in Italy. No one else could give to the faces and the movements of children a more truthful expression. But what was still more important about her drawings

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was the taste with which she grouped her children and chose tones to colour them.

I tried to make "Gugù" understand that with her capacity she could go far in art, but for that she would have to leave Ravenna and study seriously in Paris. She would never think of this, because the idea of leaving Ravenna and her old father and mother—especially her mother—was insupportable.

She produced many more charming designs, and Hachette even sent her several children's books to illustrate. Unfortunately the moment she did anything but children under four years old, her designs became more feeble. Little by little she left off illustrating children's books, but continued to make a number of charming almanacks for her friends, and put little designs in each letter that she wrote them.

After the death of her father she inherited a little fortune and lived in the hope of travelling a little with her mother, whom she adored; but to her immense sorrow, her mother also died. Miserable to the depths of her soul, she threw herself into works of charity. During the Great War she worked in the hospitals; now, as a member of the Society of Catholic Women, she spends her time in looking after neglected children and those of criminal, vicious, or condemned men, whom she places in schools or hospitals.

Loved by everybody, she is happy and gay, and certainly has done better than if she had listened to me. How rare it is to find an artist—even a great one—who is gay and happy; and how much more useful her work is than that of a painter!

In Rome I knew the family of Pasolini very well. Countess Pasolini was the most active woman I ever met, but she had not that kind of feverish activity which is sometimes directed towards one goal and sometimes towards another, without concluding any definite task. She organised public libraries, put her own in order and added a collection of works on art and another magnificent one of works about Rome. In addition to all this

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she organised her house and regulated the estates of her husband and those of her own family at Ravenna, Imola, and Coccalia. Besides that, she was always having photographs taken of everything that had the slightest interest from the art point of view in the buildings which are disappearing from Rome. Everything that had to do with the modifications which have to be introduced into buildings—either from their exterior aspect, or from the practical question of the conditions of life inside, and even from the æsthetic point of view—was always admirably conceived and put into execution, because the Countess always had an objective reason for anything she did.

The activity of this splendid woman showed itself in helping everyone who came to her, and her minute attention to details in reply to their letters was extraordinary.

If her splendid organising powers came from the lucidity of her practical mind and from her observant eyes, that which enabled her to help her neighbour and protect him came from her sympathising heart and through the position that she had made for herself in the world. People sought her advice because she was not content with merely asking—she insisted on getting what she wanted and would return again and again to the charge if she thought she *could* get it. She was frankly straight and decided, but withal of an extreme kindliness, and her qualities could be read from the expression of her face. When she was forty, she was still a pretty woman, with magnificent hair and the most beautiful neck that one could imagine. Lenbach has made a wonderful smiling picture of her.

At Rome she received a great deal, gave dinners and parties, where one always met interesting people, and in the country, in her beautiful castle of Montericco, near Imola—where I often spent happy days—there were always plenty of visitors who were glad to partake of the hospitality that she knew so well how to dispense.

Her husband, Pier Desiderio Pasolini, brother of

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Countess Angelica Rasponi, was the most amiable of men and very original. He had such a mania for saying improper and Rabelaisian things that the door would have been closed to anyone but himself—but everyone received him gladly.

He even permitted himself to combine these improprieties with remarks about his own wife, and nothing was more splendid and even moving than to see with what philosophical tranquillity she bore with him in silence. How often, sitting by her while her husband went on anyhow, I told her how much I admired her. She smiled as if to say, "What on earth can one do!" Anyone who heard Pasolini for the first time when he was in these moods would certainly have thought him a madman, especially as when in this humour his voice took on a curious inflection.

But in spite of that Pasolini was somebody, and everybody felt it. He was a fine elegant man, tall and thin, with languishing eyes and a magnificent forehead. He charmed people by the poetical turn of his mind and the noble attributes of his heart whenever he did not happen to be hampered by this particular mania. One guessed that he was really a moral and pure man who liked to feel that his improprieties surprised and amused the world without offending it—in fact often enchanted it, for his stories were very funny. Besides, everyone knew that he was a most distinguished writer, who had published a quantity of memoirs, of biographies, of historical studies, without mentioning three longer works which went into several editions. *Giuseppe Pasolini* was translated into English; *Catherine Sforza* into English, French, and German; *Gli Anni Secolari* was translated into German.

Vernon Lee, who was also a great friend of Pasolini's and equally attracted by the words and actions of this marvellous character, has written of him with such penetration in her book *For Maurice*, published by John Lane, that I venture to reproduce some of her remarks here:

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"All this, even when utterly disconcerting and embarrassing, indeed most when it disconcerted and embarrassed the hearers, was so perfect, so 'pat,' so faultlessly put on the stage of everyday and household occurrences, that we often asked ourselves, delighted and puzzled lookers-on like you and me, Maurice, to what extent it wasn't all deliberately staged by our enigmatic host? And to this day I ask myself that same unanswerable question.

"Yet taking him at other moments (but this only increased the suspicion of staging), no one could be of more excellent judgment, of more solid learning, of wider, more earnest wisdom, noble, most liberal, almost anarchical (braving authority and authorities), views and attitudes, or of kinder thoughtfulness in small humble services to obscure, even unknown persons. Indeed, one sometimes suspected that all his oddities, his disconcerting remarks and questions, might be, like the quips and cranks of jesters or the lunacies of Hamlet (that notion kept recurring to one!), assumed to put himself at ease, to make air and space for his thoughts and feelings, to build up the needful solitude and freedom for him in this dull modern world."

One can imagine the effect that his conduct produced in countries like England, where the ways of life in Society are so well regulated and strict.

Having one day met a housemaid from the Romagna in a family where he was invited to dinner, and being himself from the Romagna, he was so delighted that he went and talked to her in the servants' hall, while they were waiting for him in the dining-room. Those who know England can well picture the sensation that this caused amongst the other guests.

"What do you expect, Mr. Wolkoff?" he said, when I asked him about this episode. "At my age, I really cannot submit to regularised etiquette. I was so pleased to see someone from home, in this cold country, that I really could not resist the pleasure of having a little talk with this woman from the Romagna."

Once, long after midnight, when they began to put out the lights in the Hôtel Majestic, where I was living,

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the servant came to tell me that a gentleman absolutely insisted on seeing me, in spite of the late hour.

In came Pasolini. "Coming back from a visit to the Queen-Mother," he said, "I passed near your hotel and wanted to see you."

"Sit down," I said, and we faced each other.

After a long silence he said very seriously, "My dear Wolkoff, we must both commit suicide."

"Why?" I asked.

"We have daughters-in-law," he replied. And then was silent, after which he rose and left.

I was reminded of this visit when, later on, his son divorced his wife.

Pasolini died about seven years ago at the age of seventy-five. For thirty years I was on the best of terms with him, and his death saddened me. His sister, Angelica Rasponi, died about the same time. I knew the Pasolinis when their two sons were scarcely grown up, and to-day they are married and the Countess is a grandmother.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE time came when I wanted to give myself the luxury of painting an oil picture in the winter.

The subject was "Adam and Eve." I had to find a studio with a glass roof, big enough to place my models at a certain distance. Such conditions could only be found in Paris, so that I went there directly the cold weather prevented my painting in the Venice streets.

At Paris I soon found what I wanted, and even had the luck to find a well-made Adam and a charming Eve.

My idea was to have them seated—Adam on a little mound of earth, and Eve farther down, between his knees. Adam was to be seated in a great bed of violets, which ended on the right hand in trees and on the left by a range of rose-coloured mountains. Eve was seated on the black earth, where the violets ended, and it was also on this ground that the feet of Adam were placed. As Adam was gazing at Eve, one could only see the back part of his head. Eve was to be looking with anguish at a serpent which went twisting away on the black earth, but with its head raised and looking at her. The face of Eve would be in profile and her fingers were clenched, leaning on the thigh of Adam. Far away, an apple tree was growing and a bitten apple lay on the earth near Adam. I wanted to introduce two new ideas—Adam with long hair and Eve without a navel.

But the picture was not a success, in spite of three months' work.

However, I had a very good time, because the Ambassador of Austria in Paris at that time was Count Wolkenstein, so I had the pleasure of seeing my dear Countess

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Wolkenstein nearly every day in the beautiful palace that the Duchess of Galliéra had left to the Emperor.

She did not receive very much, as they were altering the drawing-rooms. Kalnoki, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, had given her permission to arrange two drawing-rooms on the first story just as she liked, at the expense of the Government, without changing anything on the ground floor, which was destined for official receptions.

The Countess begged me to come and help her.

The two drawing-rooms on the first floor were imitation Louis XV, covered with gilding and in very bad taste. We decided to make a green drawing-room and a red drawing-room. I took charge of the red one and she of the green. We had to search for damask to cover the walls, and we sent for a decorator and patterns.

He told us that six weeks would be enough to make up the necessary quantity of whichever patterns we chose.

I immediately thought of reducing the gilding of the ceiling and of doing away with some of the windows, which reached down to the ground; and then I noticed how quick and intelligent the French workman is.

"Gentlemen," I said to them, "look at that ceiling covered with gilding. Do your eyes see it as mine do?"

"Yes, sir—we see," they replied.

"You understand that I cannot stay all day pointing out which of the ornaments you must take away and which leave intact. Therefore I ask you to alter that corner of the ceiling before I come back to-morrow."

The next day the work had been perfectly done—and we continued in the same way all over the ceiling.

As to the windows, I condemned two or three. The top half was shut and covered with damask and the bottom half was made into book-cases covered with the same damask.

The Countess's drawing-room succeeded admirably, but the difficulty was to find a suitable carpet—not an easy thing for a green room. We went hunting everywhere, and directly the shops heard that it was for the

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Galliéra Palace they did their level best to show us the most beautiful things they had—but we found nothing to suit us. There were a great many large carpets, on which one could see the horrible influence of Europe.

We at last found a carpet amongst the things which had come from Petersburg, where Wolkenstein had been Ambassador. It was Persian, plain grey, covered with beans in more or less the same tones.

Every evening the same people came to Countess Wolkenstein's—the charming Mrs. (now Lady) Leslie (sister of Lady Randolph Churchill), young Count Esterhazy, and myself.

In the month of April I left Paris to return to Venice.

The more I saw of Countess Wolkenstein, the more I admired her open and straight nature. First, as Baroness Schleinitz, the wife of a Court Minister, and then wife of the Ambassador Wolkenstein, she had passed all her life in circles where artificiality, simulation, and conventionality are the thing; but she contrived—even at the risk of appearing as if she was not "up to her job"—to remain always sincere and frank. This was because she took seriously only those things which aroused her enthusiasm; she was indifferent to others and treated them accordingly. Understanding, however, that tastes could differ, her conversation with the people of the most contrary opinions to hers was always full of amiability and graciousness, without the slightest trace of malice or sarcasm. She knew how to appreciate the wonders of the human intelligence without submitting to the influence of passing opinions and tastes. She became a Wagnerian at the time when Wagner was spurned, and his music was the greatest interest of her life—the only thing that she loved with the passion of which her nature was capable. Besides Wagnerian music, she cared for nothing so much as Goethe's works, of which there were five editions in her castle at Ivano. Later on she developed great enthusiasm for the works of Luther.

In comparison with the intellectual pleasure that these

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three writers gave her, all others seemed to her so insignificant that she thought it useless to give much attention to them.

Always smiling and ready to come to the help of others, her relations with her friends were remarkable by their permanence. She took life gaily, and was incalculably useful in making sad people less unhappy. The consequence was that she had an immense number of friends, even amongst those who did not share her opinions.

Such men as Antoine Rubinstein, who never played in society at Petersburg, played at her house, although he knew that she was a fanatical Wagnerian.

Her heart was so excellent that she never missed a duty. She was a model daughter and the model wife of two old men.

Her life was passed happily, but any happiness that she attained for herself was due to her innate qualities and not to the idea of a goal which she tried to reach by calculation. My opinion was that this could only be because her nature was devoid of passion. I do not know at what age she married Schleinitz, nor whether she had had any love-affairs before, but all the time I knew her, her opinions of marriage were those of a woman who has never been married.

One day I ventured to point this out to her, at which she laughed very much and replied that Schleinitz, her first husband, was a very passionate man; but she said nothing about her second, who was still alive.

Like all women who do not know what passion means, she seemed much interested in other people's love-affairs, and was very sorry for those who were suffering in any way in this respect; but in spite of that she could never keep the secrets that these foolish people confided to her.

How often I said to her, "Countess, you really frighten me. What you are telling me may injure someone. You who are so good, how can you take such a responsibility on yourself?"

"You are quite right," she replied, smiling. "The

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truth is that I have such confidence in my friends that when I am talking to them I tell all my secrets, thinking that they will take charge of them and keep them for me!"

The most curious part of her nature consisted in the complete absence of religious sentiment, and she could not even understand the advantage of having any. The idea of a future life did not interest her at all. I never met any woman to whom everything to do with this question was so negligible, and that without the slightest regret. I well remember the reply that she made to me about a complaint of the Esterhazys (who were distressed that one of their family, often in her company as Secretary of Embassy at Petersburg, was beginning to lose his faith).

"Yes," said the Countess, "I am trying to liberate him from this useless accessory."

As she became older, the Countess added an interest in decoration to her other three sources of enthusiasm.

I must admit that little by little, training her eye, and taking the advice of people who knew more than she did, hunting everywhere for beauty, as she openly avowed, she enormously developed her taste. To arrange a room or an apartment became for her an interesting and very serious problem. After Paris and her apartment in the Galliéra Palace, her own castle of Ivano gave her the most to do.

One day I received a letter from her, which struck me by its great tone of sadness.

I replied at once. "Have you fallen in love, dear Countess?" I said. "I do not recognise you. Something must have happened to you."

Directly she got back to Paris, after having been for some time at Ivano, this — amongst other things — is what she replied to me:

"The passion of nature is my last passion. I think it is a consequence of my life in Paris. After Bayreuth, all the theatres seem to me so commonplace that I scarcely ever go out here. We live very quietly. The good side

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of a Republic is that it does not impose any serious duties on diplomats.

"Directly I get back to the fields, my old gaiety comes again—scarcely ever have I felt so happy and joyous as in this complete isolation, *tête-à-tête* with my husband and seeing nobody at all.

"My only society is a charming white goat, that interests me so much more than 'the fine flower of elegance,' as they used to say.

"I assure you that my profound melancholy comes from this artificial and false life that one is obliged to lead. Even now, directly I get back to this hotel—which is pure Regency—my sadness has come back and I am thankful to go to-morrow to Berchtesgaden. I assure you that I shall end my life as a recluse, and I hope then that you will come and philosophise for hours with me. . . ."

The idea of ending her life as a recluse—which came to her in Paris—soon disappeared when she began to arrange her castle, hunting for beautiful things; and her husband being no longer Ambassador, she did not have to go back to town.

This idea transformed itself into an intense desire to make her dwelling, from an æsthetic point of view, a pleasure for all her friends. This is what she wrote to me after a visit of several days that I made to Ivano:

"I want to tell you again how pleased I was to see you and how proud I am of your appreciation. I have reflected and worked so hard to make my castle an agreeable place for my friends and an æsthetic delight, that I am always enchanted to learn that my purpose has been to a certain point achieved. As I know that you never say anything you do not think, your praise gives me the greatest pleasure. You see how frank I am and how I confess my little vanity. The sun has come back, and I hope that you will return next year to see our old walls covered with sun and with verdure. . . ."

But never did she show more eagerness to bring forward her decorative powers than on the day when she arranged the coffin of her mother.

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I knew that Princess Hatzfeldt was dead, and that her daughter had arrived in time to see her once more.

For years and years this mother who adored her wrote her a card every day. Every one of the cards was written with perfect precision, never a fault, no forgetfulness, no distraction. In the last card, on the contrary, there were one or two letters missing in certain words. This frightened the Countess so much that she immediately left for Venice.

Her forebodings were true, and she found her mother completely changed. During four days the poor sick woman got up continually, arranged her pillows, and then got back into bed.

On the evening of the Countess's arrival I went to see her, when she told me all this. We spoke for a little time of the wonderful qualities of the dead woman—her mind, her heart, and her particular charm. After a little hesitation suddenly the Countess said to me:

"Will you come and see my mother?"

"No," I replied. "You know how much I loved your mother. I want to keep in my memory the features that I knew so well."

"And yet," insisted the Countess, "I beg of you to come and see her. I want to know your impressions. I want you to tell me if I have been able to make her beautiful."

I had to consent.

There were flowers, old pieces of red damask and wax tapers, but the head of the Princess was so covered with fine grey gauze that I could not see her.

"Yes, it is beautiful," I said to the Countess, as I kissed her hand.

The last time that I went to Ivano, with my daughter, we found Wolkenstein completely changed. He had an opinion of his own, and even contradicted his wife. He was splendidly well, gay, and talkative.

"You are another man," we told him frankly. "It is a miracle—to whom do you owe it?"

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"To Schweniger," replied the Countess. "He prescribed massage."

"Yes," said the Count. "They massage me three times a day, besides that which I inflict on myself."

The change was even more moral than physical. For some time Count Wolkenstein had become sulky and suspicious to a serious degree. People had even noticed that he often muttered a few words to himself, with an irritated air, that no one could understand; but at last they discovered the words were, "It is too horrible," which he repeated ("S'ist grässlich!"). He said this the moment anyone went near the Countess or spoke to her. It was certain that he was suffering from acute jealousy, or else that his brain was going.

Now that had all disappeared. He made us laugh until we cried when he showed how he massaged himself. With the lightness of a young man he lay down on the ground on his back and lifted up one of his arms. Then, with the palm of the hand of his other arm he began to give himself little hard blows, beginning with his fingers and going right up to the shoulders. After which he repeated the same process, changing arms. He did this singing the whole time more or less funny words, whose rhythm corresponded with the little blows. Finally, still lying on his back, he hit his chest with his two hands holding the fingers like a pianist, and this he did to the rhythm of the words, "Vive Loubet! Vive Loubet!"

Loubet was President of the Republic when Wolkenstein was Austrian Ambassador in Paris.

After that I only saw the Countess once again. It was one day when I was going to Berlin on the way to Russia. She was then ill and not seeing anyone. Her eyelids were swollen and red; but she was in a good temper and her mind, always alive, had not changed. I do not know exactly how much longer after that she lived, but I was told that she had erysipelas and died after a few days. In any case she had the good fortune to die before having

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witnessed the horrors of the last war and without knowing what was to happen to her Ivano.

Early in the present century, at a dinner at Count Moy's in Paris, I had next to me a young man who struck me, firstly, by his beautiful fair hair, and, secondly, by the philosophic trend of his ideas—a rare thing amongst the youth that one meets in society.

He was a Count Keyserling, a grandson of the man whom, forty years ago, I knew at Dorpat.

I saw this young man some time later when he came to settle in Venice, and then I had the pleasure of knowing him very intimately. We met again at Rome, where he visited at the same houses as myself, and we ended by becoming very good friends.

He lost his beautiful fair hair, but his intelligence went on growing. He was a man of great culture in every sense of the word, and his intelligence responded each time to every noble impression. He wanted to create and he wanted to act; that meant that he wanted to write.

One day appeared a voluminous work under the modest title *The System of the World* (*Le Système du Monde, Das Gefüge der Welt*). The author was then about thirty years of age. Soon came another work called *Immortality*. As, however, on perusing it, the reader could not make out whether the author believed in immortality or not, he bore him a grudge.

I cannot say that I am always of the same opinion as Keyserling, but what I admire in him is the facility with which he finds telling words to express the sense of his ideas, which are often of extreme subtlety.

I saw him again at Berlin, on the day that I had made my agent, Karamycheff, come to us there. But after the year 1914 I did not see Keyserling again until the day when, three years ago, he and his wife, *née* Bismarck, granddaughter of the Chancellor, came to me at Venice and were our guests for ten days.

During these ten years he had not wasted his time.

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One after the other had appeared, in German, works in which he expressed—from the point of view of philosophy—the most delicate problems of life, i.e. *Prolegomena zur Naturphilosophie* in 1910; *Schopenhauer als Verbilder*, 1910; *Some Suggestions concerning Theosophy*, 1912; *Deutschland's wahre Politische Mission*, 1919; *Unser Beruf in der veränderten Welt*, 1919; *Philosophie als Kunst*, 1922,[1] and many other works, which made him celebrated in Germany; but the *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, which was translated into English and French, established his reputation throughout the whole world.

Apart from all this, Keyserling distinguished himself still more by the establishment of the most extraordinary institution. Having lost the whole of his fortune in the Bolshevik Revolution (which also reached Esthonia, where his property was situated), he found himself obliged in 1919 to start something practical if he was not to die of starvation. And then, with a courage and a firmness of will which one would almost say was spurred on by megalomania, he created at Darmstadt a centre called the "School of Wisdom," where the whole world could study, at a certain fee.

Having heard of this on my return to Venice, I wrote to him that if his great work was a success in a country where there were twenty Universities with Professors of Philosophy in each one of them, it proved that Germany was very ill. Was it to this malady, or to the extraordinary intelligence of Keyserling, that one must attribute his great success. I cannot say. The fact is, that this school after having evolved and passed through many modifications still exists. It has its own review, *The Guiding Light* (*Leuchter*). Once a year a great number of people go there, and many learned men, invited by Keyserling, read lectures, of which he sums up the meaning and the spirit.

[1] *A Prologue of Natural Philosophy; Schopenhauer as a Perverter; Some Suggestions concerning Theosophy; Germany's Real Political Mission; Our Vocation in the Altered World; Philosophy as Art.*

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To put it in a nutshell, Keyserling is more active than ever.

I need not say that to estimate the opinions of the German Intellectuals, one must be well acquainted with German literature of the last few years and must have been from time to time in that country. At my age, and in my position as a Russian, it is very difficult. I only know that very often I find in this review opinions which I do not share.

"The whole world agrees" (to quote one example from Keyserling) "that the German people is, more than any other people, dominated by envy."

I do not find that the whole world is agreed about this, and even if it was, it would not prove anything.

I also do not share the opinion that I read in *The Guiding Light* about the German bourgeoisie, and the classes that are going to replace it. But even admitting that, to judge of all that, one must know more than I do what the feeling is in Germany, I prefer not to discuss it, and to confine myself to other questions. Whether Keyserling is right or wrong in the enormous number of intuitions which germinate round the innumerable problems that his intelligence is trying to resolve, the future alone can decide. But it is certain that he has resolved the greatest of all problems—that of the choice of his own wife—in the most satisfactory manner. She is beautiful, intelligent, most attractive, and charming in every way.

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CHAPTER XXIII

I HAVE often had occasion to notice the superiority of the English employees in post offices, telegraph offices, and railway stations—in fact all those who have directly to do with the public, and in particular the travelling public—compared to similar employees in other countries. They are so much more polite, and in no other country do they give the impression that they do not want merely to limit themselves to what is strictly demanded of them by their employment. They are always ready to do more.

How often, for instance, it has happened to me that I have had to ask the clerk in a telegraph office to write a telegram for me, and never have I been refused. Not knowing enough English to express myself in it—having never really learnt the language, or rather having picked it up simply from hearing it spoken—every time I had to send a telegram I was forced to ask the clerk to write it for me. The clerk always listened to me very civilly while I explained, waiting for me to write the telegram; but directly I said that I was incapable of doing it, he immediately took a pen and did it for me. It was not once, or ten times that this has happened to me, but over twenty times. The following is a remarkable instance of the kindness of employees.

About sixty years ago I had to cross the Channel, in January, from Calais to Dover, in the *Petrel*, one of those little French boats which used to be the only ones running between France and England. (I think I remember that its captain had only one leg.) There were three degrees of frost below zero, and I came straight from Russia in one of the sheepskin coats that are the

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warmest one can wear. They are called "polouschoubok" and button tight up to the body. I also wore thick shoes and woollen stockings. Calais in those days was very different from what it is to-day. The station was miserable, and so were the boats. With my thick coat I was not afraid of being cold, but as I am a bad sailor I decided to remain on deck. Directly we started—even before the ship had left the harbour—everyone rushed down to the cabins. The moon was shining on white clouds which raced along very quickly. All of a sudden something that I took for a cloud fell on the deck; the boat had just cut through a wave, and it was the spray, lit up by the moon, that I mistook for a cloud. This spray knocked me down with one blow. As I fell, I caught hold, by my arm, of the stanchion which supported the captain's gangway.

My umbrella and my valise were carried away; I remained lying down, clinging to the stanchion. One wave after another swept the deck. The good sailors covered me up as well as they could with oilskins, but my legs were wet up to the knees, although my chest was saved by the "polouschoubok."

Instead of doing the journey in two hours, we took four. I felt as if I was dying, and directly I reached Dover, with my first-class ticket I went straight into a third-class compartment which was empty, and I jumped about and struck my arms against my body to keep warm, as coachmen do in the winter.

When I arrived in London—I do not remember at which station—I rushed at once to a first-class waiting-room, where there was a splendid fire. No one was about and the waiting-room was empty. Considering that my life was more important than appearances, I took off my pelisse and my shoes and stockings and laid them on the fender so that they could dry. On the wall opposite the fireplace there was a big window through which you could see from outside what was happening in front of the fire. I had not been drying myself for more than ten minutes

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before a policeman entered and came up to me, telling me that it was forbidden to undress in the waiting-room.

Knowing very little English, I could do nothing but imitate with my arms the movement of the sea. However, the good man understood and explained to me that he wanted my luggage ticket. He took it and went away. After a quarter of an hour he returned and made signs that I should follow him. As it was impossible to put on my wet shoes or even my stockings, I decided to follow him barefooted, holding my shoes in one hand and my stockings in the other. Happily, as I have said, there were very few people in the station.

After having gone about a hundred yards, he opened a door and made me go into the room of the station-master. There I found a glowing fire and my box on a chair in front of it. A gentleman stood there looking very amiably at me and trying to make me understand that I must treat the room as if it were my own. He showed me —behind a screen—a place where I could wash and make my toilette, and then intimated to me that I should lock the door after him so that no one could disturb me.

I cannot describe the feeling of well-being that filled me, and it was not only this feeling that dominated me, but a very great admiration for the man who took all this responsibility upon himself, just out of pity for the sufferings of a fellow-creature, without knowing the person to whom he had rendered such great service.

I left that room transfigured. I asked a porter for my box and gave the key of the room back to the policeman, being obliged to take the train without being able to see that excellent station-master again; but I begged the English friend to whom I was going to thank him in an appropriate manner.

During the summer of 1875 I went with my family to pay a visit to the relations of my wife in England.

They lived in a very fine place called Feniton Court. It was beautifully furnished, with a large garden and

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excellent servants, from the butler to the gardener, for my mother-in-law was very particular. For a Russian, life in this sort of a house is not very comfortable, because we are not accustomed to dressing for dinner every evening, and the dinner-jacket did not then exist. I asked my father-in-law whether I need dress for dinner, but he explained to me that in England good servants would not stay in a house where the people did not observe this custom, and I had to give in. One must admit, however, that in England these changes of dress are necessary, as towards the evening everyone plays lawn tennis, Badminton, or other games, which make one very hot, and it is really necessary to change one's linen. Directly one gets into the way of playing these games, one accepts the British way of living, because, on the whole, it is the most comfortable.

In the house, besides my wife's parents, there were two brothers-in-law and four sisters-in-law, so that the time passed very agreeably.

Frank, the eldest of the brothers-in-law, told me once that they were counting on me to take part in a game of cricket which was going to be played between two teams, whose names I have forgotten. There, of course, had to be eleven on each side, and he said that there were only ten of us, so that I should have to be the eleventh, and added, " We are going to teach you what you have to do. It is true that it is not possible to play well if one has not played it from his childhood, but you must do what you can."

So he began to show me how to throw a little leather ball against a tree a certain distance off. One had to throw it with a stiff arm (overhand), as one does when one throws stones. I found it extremely difficult.

Then he handed me a bat—a kind of oar-shaped piece of wood—with which I had to defend a little stick driven into the earth, and against which he threw the ball.

These exercises went on for a week, and my brother-in-law said that I had made remarkable progress.

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At last the day of battle arrived, and we went in a carriage to an immense field, on one side of which there was a big tent erected for the occasion and full of people. On the other side there was a small house in which the players dressed and undressed. I must confess that I began to be rather nervous. To exhibit a depressing inferiority before a big crowd did not seem to me at all amusing; but there it was, and I had to go through with it.

At a given moment they took me to the little house and undressed me, leaving only my shirt and my white trousers. They tied on my legs enormous shields covered with india-rubber tubes. These were destined to protect me from the blows of those frightful balls. Finally, they put a bat into my hand, and thus accoutred, I set out.

The moment I went out of the door the people in the pavilion applauded wildly, and I went to my place to defend the wicket. I managed to hit two balls, but the third touched my wicket and therefore finished me off—and I was obliged to walk back to the little house to take off my things again.

The public were very generous and, probably knowing how I came to be enlisted, renewed their applause.

After some time I was put at the end of the field amongst those who had to catch this hard and heavy ball, which often came so high that one had to know *how* to catch it, for fear of injuring one's hands.

I was resolved to make one catch, even if I had to hurt my hands. Suddenly a ball came in my direction! I made three steps to one side to catch it, when at the same moment I received a fearful blow on the chest from my neighbour, Coleridge. We both fell to the earth, the ball between us. For nearly a week I suffered from this dreadful blow.

(By the way, Coleridge was the son of the celebrated Attorney-General, whose speech during the famous Tichborne trial lasted nineteen days.)

When I relate this story of my cricket experiences to

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Englishmen, they laugh till the tears come. It all seems to them so incredible and so comical.

All my English exhibitions, which extended over twenty years, were under the auspices of the Fine Art Society (who had a commission of 25 per cent. on the sales). As I was obliged to deliver enough water-colours to cover the walls of one or two of the rooms reserved for me by a given date, it sometimes happened that I was not ready, or else that I had to touch up a certain number. Besides, as the time necessary for the dispatch of the drawings from Venice to London was difficult to calculate, I often preferred to go myself to London, so as to work at my pictures up to the last possible minute. Often I was still at them whilst the frames were already waiting, when a chance occurred which solved this difficulty and even made it agreeable.

Thanks to the extreme kindness of Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, I was allowed to work in her studio in Kensington. This studio, arranged with great taste, had a splendid light and nobody could interrupt me there. Sometimes her Royal Highness would rejoice my heart by coming to paint or model too, for she is a born artist, and has such a frank, objective, and large-minded critical faculty that to show her one's work was not only pleasant but instructive.

Her husband, the Marquis of Lorne, son of the Duke of Argyll, was at this time a Liberal, though married to the Queen's daughter—a curious fact that could only happen in England. He was an excellent man, without any conceit, and with a European culture.

One day I was dining with the Princess and her husband and the latter's election agent—that is to say, the gentleman who managed his political affairs and canvassed for him—when Lorne proposed that I should go with him to the East End, where he was to make an address. So after dinner we took a hansom and went down to the hall, which was large and uninviting, and filled

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with a somewhat rough audience, who applauded our entrance.

We took our place on a platform about five feet high, which filled one end of the room, and Lorne immediately began his speech. I was sitting directly behind him with two or three other men. The speech, which did not arouse any great enthusiasm, lasted about an hour, after which Lorne asked me to go with him to a Workmen's Club, where they expected him.

We again took a hansom. On the way, he asked me if I had ever been in any position where I was forced to have to do with the proletariat.

I said yes. I had been delegate to the Red Cross, at Odessa, during the war between Russia and Turkey.

"That's it," he said—"that's how I shall introduce you to these men."

We went into a room on the ground floor, as far as I can remember. All the people in it came forward to greet us, and when Lorne introduced me, immediately drank my health in the beer-mugs they held in their hands.

Lorne talked in a very friendly way to them, but nobody sat down.

On one of the walls was an inscription in enormous letters which Lorne pointed out to me, saying that it was he who had put it there, and asking my opinion about it. The sentence was, "Justice for all; privilege for none."

"To tell the truth," I replied, "it does not please me, for the more culture grows in a country, the more does the decentralisation of interests become marked, and the more numerous do specialists become. Every specialist, from his very nature, enjoys privileges. You would not let everybody cut off your leg or teach your children?"

"Yes—yes," he replied; "but here this refers to class privilege."

"Then," I replied, "you want to abolish all rights of property and inheritance. Though expressed by a Marquis, that is the opinion of a revolutionary. Don't you see that?"

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He replied nothing to this, but began to laugh. I must confess that it has always been difficult for me to understand these great English gentlemen who belonged to the Liberal or Socialist parties and accepted—in spite of this—Government appointments. Lorne was, later on, Governor-General of Canada, and, people said, filled the post admirably. Did he then change his political opinions? I cannot say; but what I am certain of is that he always remained a most honourable man in the strictest sense of the term. So if he changed, it was life and experience that altered his point of view.

One day, I think it was in 1888, he turned up in Venice, just at the moment that the English Fleet was stationed in the Adriatic. When he arrived, I suggested that we should go down and bathe at the Lido—which was not then what it is now, and where one could bathe more agreeably than at present. We were both strong swimmers, and it struck us that it would be interesting to see what it was like to save someone who was drowning. We wanted especially to know whether it was very tiring to swim with someone leaning on one's shoulder. First he and then I tried, and we soon realised how difficult and fatiguing it is to save anyone whose body is not absolutely submerged. The weight of the head and arms leaning on the shoulders of the rescuer is too great to be borne for long.

This experiment finished, Lorne suggested taking a gondola and going with him to the ship *Alexandra*, where he wanted to call on the Admiral-in-Command. I consented with pleasure, and was introduced to the latter, who asked me if it would amuse me to see the very latest pattern of warship.

"You would be doing me the greatest service," I replied, "if it isn't too much trouble."

So they put me into a steam launch, which took me to a ship whose name I forget, but it was commanded by Prince Louis of Battenberg. I can't remember whether he was Captain or Admiral, but he was a charming and

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handsome man. Having received me very cordially, he put me into the hands of an officer who showed me round. I went into the turrets ; I saw the cannon and the mechanism which directs both turrets and cannon, and the place the Captain occupies during a battle. It was a cylinder about a metre and a half across, covered with an iron roof which left a space of several inches between the roof and the rim of the cylinder, so that he could look round and see what was happening. In front of him were a quantity of tubes and apparatus which enabled him to be in communication with the different parts of his ship and to give the various officers orders.

I went back to the *Alexandra*, and the Admiral invited me to lunch with him, and Lorne. At lunch he asked me my impressions.

" I do not understand," I said, " how all that apparatus —which is intended no doubt to enable the Captain to receive reports and to give orders—can function during the overwhelming noise of a battle."

" My opinion is very much the same as yours," remarked the Admiral.

The possibility of working at my water-colours in Princess Louise's studio made all the difference to me, and I liked immensely going to London, and went there often till the year 1900. When I inherited Balovnevo, I left off painting, and therefore ceased my visits, especially as I fell ill and the illness lasted nearly two years.

One Saturday I was just leaving London, and the Fine Art Society had given me a note for £800 sterling, without thinking of the worry that it was going to cause me.

I paid the bill at the hotel and the cab to the station with the last English money I possessed. Arrived at Charing Cross, I asked for a ticket for Paris, but when they saw my note for £800, with which I wanted to pay for the ticket, the employee seemed astonished and told me that not only did he not know that such enormous

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notes existed, but that he had not enough money to give me the change.

"Sir," I said, "you do not know how serious it is for me. I have to go dead or alive, and as the train is starting in ten minutes, it is impossible for me to go to a bank."

I shall never forget the interest that this man took in my awkward situation, for it was really touching. "Have you no other money on you?" he asked. "I will give you a ticket to Dover and there you can get change."

I began to look feverishly in my pockets, and there I found several old Italian notes for ten francs each.

"What are these notes worth?" asked the clerk.

I told him the sum and he gave me a ticket, accepting my word for their value.

Arrived at Dover, I went to a little hotel, where I showed the proprietor my note for £800. Never had he heard of such a sum! I went to the proprietor of the great hotel, the Lord Warden, and met with the same reply.

The employees at the hotel looked at the note with astonishment and admitted that it was genuine because it was exactly like the ones issued for £5 or £10, except that the figures stamped on it were £800.

Not knowing what to do, I next went to the Russian Consul. There I found an Englishman of about seventy-five sitting in front of the fire.

"What am I to do, sir?" I said. "They are expecting me to dinner to-morrow (Sunday) in Paris."

"Dear, dear! You will not arrive, that is all," he said, smiling, "for no one is going to change that note in Dover, and you will have to go back to London."

"What?" I said. "You want me to go back to London?"

"It is the only thing you can do," he said, "as on Sunday the bank is shut."

You can imagine my annoyance. I went back to my little hotel and told the story to the proprietor. I again hunted through my clothes and at last discovered some

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more Italian ten-franc notes. Changed into sterling, there was just enough to pay the hotel bill and the cost of the voyage next day to Calais.

I think that neither the employee at the railway-station nor the proprietor of the hotel had any guarantee of the value of the small notes that I gave them, except my word, and I could only be overwhelmed by their generosity.

On Sunday morning I arrived at Calais and went straight to the money-changer there, who was a Frenchman. I at once showed him the note for £800. "If you do not change this, I shall not get to Paris to-day," I said.

"But why on earth should I not change it?" he said.

"Because no one in England would change it," I replied, "and they stated that only the Bank of England would be able to do so."

"Give me the note, and in half an hour—just time to come and go from the town of Calais—you will have your seven thousand five hundred francs."

When he brought me the money, I asked him to explain the phenomenon why a bank note—of whose existence for such a large sum no one in England was even aware—was immediately changed in France.

"The reason is that they are a bit dense, the English, with regard to things they do not understand—and we have more to do with bank notes than they."

Another Saturday I reached London at seven o'clock in the evening and stayed at the hotel at Charing Cross station. I changed, took a hansom, and went to the General Post Office.

In England it is not very usual to send letters to Poste Restante, so the office where they take in letters is very small and there are not many people there.

"Have you letters for Wolkoff?"

"Yes, sir."

I saw in the hands of the clerk two letters addressed to me.

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"Have you a card, a letter, or an envelope on you?" he asked me. But I, having changed my clothes in a hurry, had forgotten to bring my papers with me.

"My letters are not registered," I said to him.

"Yes; but we are not allowed to give them up without some kind of proof of identity of the person claiming them."

"But of what use is the proof?" I said. "Here I am waiting for and unable to get my two letters, which are very important to me. It is a quarter to eight, so I cannot go to the hotel and come back by eight o'clock, and at eight o'clock you shut. To-morrow is Sunday, so that I should not be able to get my letters before Monday. Cannot you make an exception?"

"I am very sorry," replied the clerk, with an air of real commiseration, "but I cannot do it."

The interest that the employee takes in the affairs of those he serves, and his wish to come to their help in whatever way his duty allows him, is one of the things that strikes the stranger most in England—from the policeman to the guard on the railway, or the telegraph clerk to the conductor, everyone helps you when they see that you need it.

The face of the employee who had to refuse to give me my letters expressed sincere regret, and this was reflected on the countenances of the people around, who were much interested.

I saw that there was nothing for it but to go, but as I went to the door my brain was working. I must get my letters somehow.

Suddenly I remembered that my shirts were marked in full with my name, so I pulled the end of my shirt out and returned to the counter-rail, where I showed the employee the marking.

"Is that enough for you?"

"Certainly, certainly," he said, quite delighted, and gave me my letters.

The public began to laugh and applaud.

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If the Englishman is cold, the English public is never so, for it is always ready to help a neighbour. For instance, when one goes to the railway-station just as the train is starting and tries to catch it, someone usually helps you into the carriage. On the Continent they hold you back—and that reminds me of an adventure which happened to me at Lausanne.

I was making a little excursion with two ladies. I was taking charge of the expenses and kept the money and the tickets. They were already in the train, whilst I was standing on the steps of the restaurant carriage, and a cook, with his white cap on, smoking out of the window, was watching me. Suddenly the train began to move, but just as I was going to get in, an unknown man seized me, no doubt with the intention of protecting me against a catastrophe. This intervention was so unexpected that for one or two seconds I was completely paralysed. "Why don't you hit him over the head?" said the cook, with perfect calmness, as the train slowly moved out of the station.

I did not hit him, but I managed to get away from him and push him from me with all my strength, and had just time to get in.

In the restaurant car I said to the cook, "You gave me really good advice, and I thank you. Here is a franc for you to buy a cigar with, as I cannot give you one, not having any on me."

Often when I am in a bad temper I think of the calm way in which the cook said, "Why don't you hit him over the head?"—and that restores my good temper.

A few years later I was in Paris, and passing by chance near the General Post Office, the idea came to me suddenly to go and inquire whether there were any letters for me.

There was a letter, but the employee again asked for some document—a card or envelope, or a letter—and as I had nothing on me, he refused to give it to me.

The idea then came to me to suggest to him what I had done in England, and I did so. It was amusing to see

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the effect that it produced on the man. He thought that I was insane.

"But the name on my shirt, sir, is surely more important than a card or envelope, which might be picked up anywhere?"

While I explained all this to him, his face became more and more red, and he was furious. In the end he shrieked, "But it's against the regulations—it's against the regulations!"

Annoying him still more, I added, "Well, the other day I managed to get a letter in that way in England."

"What the devil does that matter to me?" he cried. "We are not in England—we are not in England."

The Frenchman thinks of nothing but regulations, and everyone knows it—but perhaps he is right with his public.

The employee in England certainly understood that my case was exceptional and could not become usual because it would not be gentlemanly. In France, on the other hand, where no one bothers whether a man is gentlemanly or not, people might very easily get into the way of coming to fetch their letters holding the ends of their shirts in their hands.

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CHAPTER XXIV

WHEN going from Petersburg to Munich at the time when the painter Lenbach was furnishing his house, I asked if he would show it to me, although it was a long way from being finished.

It contained a number of very beautiful things brought from Italy, but my clearest recollection is of a little room in which the stucco walls were surmounted by a vaulted ceiling covered with blue shells.

"There!" said Lenbach. "It was not easy to obtain these shells, and we had to lose a lot of time getting them from Hamburg. How do you like them?" he asked, seeing that I was silent.

"I like the shells, but I do not like the room," I replied.

"Why not?"

"Because, according to my ideas, to adapt the objects we know in nature to ornaments is false taste. An ornament should have an idea, and that is why it is necessary to formalise a plant if one wants to employ it as an ornament in architecture, painting, or sculpture," I replied.

"A pin, which is merely a piece of virgin gold, and which is worn on one's cravat—cannot that be beautiful?"

"Well, I should not like that kind of pin," I replied.

"It depends on one's taste," replied Lenbach. "But the room as a whole, does it please you?"

"No, it doesn't please me, because a room must be made to live or love in, and this room does not give me any satisfaction either from the point of view of life or of love."

Lenbach then showed me the servants' rooms, whose

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walls were covered with red papers. "They like red," he said.

Apropos of "life and love," the Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Weimar, to whom I related this conversation one day, made a better reply than Lenbach.

"The shells prevent you from loving!" he said—"but you forget that Venus was born in a shell."

According to the generally accepted opinion, the Emperor Alexander III was a great patriot, but of mediocre culture, pig-headed, and very unyielding. Chance, however, convinced me that he was above all human, simple, and good, and that at a time of my life when, working at painting from morning till evening, in Egypt and Venice, I was far from having much to do with the Emperor.

The marriage of my son Vladimir with the daughter of Count Heyden was just about to take place, and we two, as fathers of the couple to be married, had, according to Russian custom, to find a "godfather." Our choice fell with one accord on Paul Joukowsky, who at this moment happened to be at Gatchina in attendance on the Emperor. We telegraphed him to come by the first train.

"Do you know, my dear sir," he said, the moment he saw me, "that it happens to be very difficult to do what you want at the moment? The truth is that in very high circles they are not pleased with you."

"'High circles,' you say?" I replied. "But what high circles are there in Russia besides the Emperor?"

"Yes, that is just it—the Emperor bears you a grudge. You know what a patriot he is. He knows that you paint beautiful water-colours. The Grand Duchesses who go to London see them, speak about them, buy them—and he is the only Russian who will never be able to see one of your exhibitions, because you will admit that he could not undertake a voyage to England merely to satisfy this desire. Well!" said Joukowsky, with conviction, "he is annoyed about it, and he has some excuse. Why don't you ever exhibit in Russia?"

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"I must beg you to tell the Emperor," I replied, "that I exhibit my daubs only in England for a dozen different reasons. Firstly, because it is the country of water-colour painters; secondly, because my wife is English, and therefore I have facilities there which I should not find elsewhere; thirdly, because I am not a painter by profession but by the merest chance, and I am always hopeful of leaving this profession and settling down in the country to pursue my researches, which would be more useful to the world than any kind of exhibition; fourthly, Russian painters are so jealous of one another that to thrust myself amongst them without ever having really learnt painting would only seem to be throwing down the gauge to their hostility.

"But please also tell his Majesty that after my death, one word from him would be sufficient to arrange an exhibition of my water-colours at St. Petersburg, and every decent Englishman would at once take the greatest pains to send everything of mine he possessed so as to be able to say that he had done it to give pleasure to his Majesty the Emperor of Russia."

Next day, Joukowsky came back from Gatchina. "The Emperor says that it is useless to wait for your death, and suggests that you should arrange something during your lifetime."

"The goodness of his Majesty touches me profoundly," I replied, "but I beg him most humbly to excuse me, because for very serious reasons it is impossible for me to acquiesce in his proposition."

Two days afterwards Joukowsky returned. "The Emperor directs me to say that he would like to have one of your water-colours. If you have one which you can give him, I will take it to him. He insists, however, that you must fix the price."

"I regret very much that I have only got this one with me. Take it, but do not forget, my dear friend, to tell the Emperor that if our country gentlemen are in the habit of spending abroad the revenues that they derive

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from their Russian estates, I, on the contrary, am working abroad so as to be able to spend part of what I gain on my Russian lands, where I am even now draining a marsh."

Joukowsky left me, but came back the next day. "The Emperor says that he is pleased to hear your patriotic sentiments, but all the same he gives you this advice. Do not invest all the money you make in your estates, because you will ruin yourself."

This counsel touched me profoundly, because I saw how good the Emperor was and knew how often he had seen instances where patriots, desirous of introducing improvements of all kinds upon their estates, had ended by ruining themselves. Their own ignorance on the one side, and the conduct of their agents on the other, were the usual causes.

I must observe here that the situation changed completely during the reign of Nicholas II, and with the new methods adopted by the proprietors, who began to occupy themselves with their properties, agriculture quite notably improved.

Paul Joukowsky was the son of the poet Joukowsky, one of the most cultivated men of his time, a natural son of Monsieur Bounine, a landed proprietor and a noble, by a Turkish mother. The education of the Emperor Alexander II had been entrusted to him, and he was certainly the man most suited to this task, for no one in Russia had closer relations with Western Europe than he. He was a friend of Goethe, Pouchkine, and all the men of that time who were distinguished for their culture.

At the age of sixty he married Mademoiselle Reuthern, and had a son, Paul, and a daughter.

Paul had a unique position at the Court of Alexander II, who was extremely good to him. I had made the acquaintance of this young man when he was only twenty. A friend, Lolia Sabouroff, had insisted upon my going to his house, telling me that he was the most interesting man in Petersburg.

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I found that he was completely spoilt by the privileges of the Court, where, thanks to the goodness of the Emperor, he was accustomed always to having his own way.

I remember the following words which he spoke in my presence: "The Empress is going into the Crimea. Please tell Madame Maltzef [1] to have a compartment prepared for me, because I should like very much to go with her."

He had a charming apartment near Petersburg, full of presents from the Emperor, and was himself painting a great picture representing a pietà.

I was already fond of painting at that time and was the same age as Joukowsky, so I ventured to point out that the drawing of his picture left much to be desired. This straightforward criticism made our relations a little strained.

Seven or eight years later I was at Paris staying with my friend the Military Agent of Russia, Baron Fréedericksz, when he suggested to me that we should go to see Joukowsky's studio.

"I have not the slightest desire to do so," I replied. "A gentleman who, because of the favour of the Russian Court, thinks himself a serious artist really does not interest me."

"Everything is changed, my dear friend," said Fréedericksz. "Come and see."

In truth, the moment I came into the room I saw that Joukowsky had become another man. On a great easel I recognised the Petersburg picture, but immensely improved. Joukowsky looked as though he were down in the world, and the moment we got outside I asked my friend for an explanation.

"These are the facts," he said. "His sister, who was brought up at Smolny, had clandestine relations with the brother of the Emperor, the Grand Duke Alexis, who wanted to marry her, but the Emperor was opposed to the marriage. The position of Joukowsky, who naturally

[1] Intimate friend of the Empress Maria Alexandrovna, wife of Alexander II.

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took the side of his sister, was shaken, and both of them had to leave the Court.

"Joukowsky would not accept any pension from the Government, but they gave his sister a yearly income, and she met a Baron Wöhrman, who married her and adopted the son of the Grand Duke, to whom the name of Count 'Béliowsky' was given.

"Joukowsky hoped to make a living by painting, and had begun to do portraits."

All this happened whilst I was Arbiter of Peace in the country and during my stay at Würzburg and Heidelberg.

The life of Joukowsky was a very precarious one. At one minute he would be in financial difficulties, and the next he would be in receipt of money derived from the sale of portraits or from some unexpected quarter. An enthusiastic musician, he ended by becoming intimate with the Wagner family, with whom he lived for years.

After the death of the Master, and the episode which I have already described about the way he opposed making a mask of Wagner, he went to Weimar, where, thanks to his excellent relations with the Grand Duke Carl Alexander, they gave him a very good studio, and he continued his painting.

But soon after, fate smiled upon him in a very encouraging way. The Emperor Alexander II died, and Joukowsky returned to Russia, where the Emperor Alexander III received him with open arms and settled him at Petersburg. He received an income from the Government, with a commission to erect the monument to Alexander II in the Kremlin.

The relations between himself and Alexander III were so intimate that Joukowsky passed the greater part of his time with the Emperor, and as in all ceremonies and processions he was always at his side, the Master of Ceremonies was not at all pleased; so to regularise the situation, the Emperor gave him a big Court appointment. It was at this juncture that Count Heyden and I had asked him to come to Petersburg for the marriage.

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On the death of Alexander III his fortunes again changed, although the Grand Duke Serge and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth were exceedingly kind to him. His nephew —the son of his sister—Count Béliowsky now grown up, married a Princess Troubetskoy, and the Grand Duke Serge, brother of the Grand Duke Alexis, treated him like a relation.

The assassination of the Grand Duke Serge at Moscow was another blow to the career of Joukowsky. However, he stayed on in that city and found interesting work there.

In 1905, when the revolution was going on, he wrote to me to Berlin :

" I have fled from that mad-house, which, at the moment, is all we can call our poor country. A mad-house, without a director, is uninhabitable after a while. I worked on as long as I could at the chapel of the Grand Duke Serge. I was passionately interested in my work and discovered that one could learn to work in the middle of constant danger ; but at last disgust got the better of me, disgust caused by the incredible feebleness and ridiculous sentimentality of the Government. Imagine the come-down shown by their having given up all power into the hands of an adventurer like Witte. I have had enough of it and would rather be a porter at the theatre in Bayreuth than remain in Russia as long as Witte and the Jews are in power."

On the 2nd of January 1906 Joukowsky wrote to me from Dresden :

" No one has any confidence in the future of our country. I am at this moment profoundly disgusted, quite naturally, for I am not made to follow the movements of a weathercock, who is the cause of our country's miseries past and future."

The " weathercock " was probably the Emperor Nicholas II.

However, he soon went back to Russia, for he wrote to me a little later :

" I have received a telegram from Moscow, which says everything is going on well. I am beginning to breathe,

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for I was very anxious about my poor servants and my friends. I am very comfortable in this excellent hotel—the Bellevue, where I have stayed ever since 1866. The physiognomy of a house is as important for my well-being as that of an individual. All this is doing my nerves much good, for they were horribly unstrung by the last eight months of my existence at Moscow."

I cannot remember what turns of fortune he still had to go through, but I recollect going to see him at Weimar, where he had retired, completely overwhelmed by Mademoiselle ——, a half-feminine creature, very large and thick, and who, in her own Memoirs published in Germany, mentions that the day when she first met Joukowsky was the supreme day of her life.

Joukowsky was still painting a landscape scene from his window. "Before getting quite old," I said, "I suggest that you and I shall go with Princess Olga Bariatinsky to paint at Princess de Saxe-Altenburg's at Seran. I saw a most beautiful landscape subject there the other day, and we could together enjoy the hospitality of that fine and splendid soul the Princess."

Joukowsky was on the point of saying how pleased he was, when the half-feminine being said to him in a significant tone of voice, "Paul, do you want to leave me?"—and the excellent Paul was silent.

I understood, of course, that he was lost. I do not remember how much longer he lived, but I think he died before the Declaration of War.

He was a man of taste and culture. The monument that he constructed to Alexander II in the Kremlin was very much criticised, and certainly had faults, but I should like to know where is the monument that pleases everyone. In its criticism the public always praises some monument which happens to be in fashion, to serve for comparison, but it generally forgets that the object of its admiration gained very little praise fifty years before. One has only to remember the monument of Colleoni at Venice, about which the whole world raves to-day,

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but which nobody praised at the beginning of the last century.

I went to Sitchovo nearly every year, if only for a week, and each time I noted more and more the activity of Karamycheff—his uprightness, his honesty, and his intelligence.

"What do you do in the evening," I asked him one day, "when your sister and niece have gone to bed and the workmen have gone? What do you do while the wind is hurling the snow against the windows" (shutters are unknown in Russia) "and the wolves are howling around you?"

"What do I do then?" he replied, smiling mysteriously. "I write verses—I have that passion; and I think that they are not utterly bad," he said with conviction.

Poetry was the only feeble side of this man. The ideas in his verses were always excellent, often fine, but he never understood the poetry of form, nor could he appreciate it in other poets. I brought him poems from Pouchkine and Koltzoff, but in his secret heart he thought his own superior. He rhymed easily, and it was rhyming that he cared for more than anything. He put everything into verse. Every event had its page: the canalisation and draining of the marsh, the lake in front of the dyke, the boat that I had made, my daughter's row in the boat, etc.

I soon built a new house at Sitchovo, with warehouses and the barns indispensable for agriculture. The road was bordered by green hedges. Karamycheff himself had a passion for hedges of fir and he himself clipped them. His art had gone so far that he had managed to grow an alley of birch trees half a kilometre long, leading into the forest and forming a tunnel about six feet across and eight feet high, completely covered with leaves, down to the ground.

Karamycheff had a great fondness for Sitchovo, not only because of the work there but also from an æsthetic point

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of view. If it had not been that there were 75 kilometres to be travelled over in a carriage, on bad roads, one could easily have spent six weeks of every year at Sitchovo. At the time when I was busy painting at Venice, Sitchovo was already beginning to prosper, so that I decided to spend two months of the summer there, with my wife and daughter. As we went through Petersburg we engaged a cook, a valet, and a housemaid.

Karamycheff and his family moved into the old house and we settled in the new one. Every two days a téléga went to Staraja Roussa, a town 75 versts away, much larger than Porhoff, to get provisions for Sitchovo and the post. Not only did the cook give us excellent food, but he started a prosperous little business for himself, which probably brought him in a gain of about three times the amount of the salary we paid him. He took advantage of the cart going in to the town to get quantities of sugar and glass bottles, and these he filled with jam and mushrooms. All the day the peasants brought him strawberries, raspberries, whortleberries, and every kind of mushroom. They were delighted to find a wholesale buyer to take all they brought him, for the towns were too far off, and they sold him everything very cheaply. To take the fruit of his labours to the station when we left, the cook had to hire a téléga.

The work of drainage became more interesting as the dykes became deeper; and the earthworks we had constructed having held up the water, a charming little lake was made near the house. Sometimes the marsh looked very striking. The absolute tranquillity which reigned there on a beautiful evening impressed one, because it was not just a marsh covered with little islands of solid earth, but a sea of moss as far as the eyes could reach.

There were a lot of stones in the fields, often very large ones: one of Karamycheff's favourite sports was to get them out of the ground, and in the evening, when the work was over, it was astonishing what he did with two or three workmen and a few beams and cords.

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Thus the property rose in value all the time, and often I put back everything I got from it into improving the drainage, instead of having it sent to me abroad, where I still worked at my painting.

Karamycheff's life at Sitchovo up till 1900 was about as peaceful, hardworking, and happy as a life could be. It was about that year that his relations with the populace began to be less agreeable and bad days followed. The younger peasants often went to Petersburg, where they heard more or less revolutionary talk, and they came back and repeated it everywhere. Soon the youth of the day was infected with an evil spirit prompting them to assert themselves and to defy the world, on the model of the young merchants who broke mirrors for the pleasure of showing how far they could go, and the peasants also invented ways of advertising that they were afraid of no one. In the villages one saw young men standing in the middle of the street armed with a strap, at the end of which they had tied a piece of iron, defying everyone to come near them. Very naturally the passers-by gave them a wide berth, but the rural police did nothing.

All the old peasants complained of the growing insubordination of youth. But they ended by imitating it the moment there was a question of working or of fulfilling a troublesome duty. The workmen engaged for the fields worked so badly that the harvest scarcely sufficed to pay for the labour. And even those who worked gratuitously on the principle that they kept half the harvest were so nonchalant and lazy that the position of the agent became a real torment.

The speeches of the Intelligentsia, that class of malcontents without past or future, without any scientific training, and without any practical knowledge, inoculated in the people a quantity of vague aspirations which resulted in no definite or general trend except the tendency to flout all authority. The authorities, who knew their weakness, did little or nothing. This Intelligentsia produced nothing, but did a great deal of harm by making

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difficult the task of those who respected law and liked order.

One day when I was at Oranienbaum the Grand Duchess Catherine asked me to go with her to visit the palace of Peter III, the husband of the Empress Catherine II, which they were just restoring. The Grand Duchess wanted to have my opinion on the work that they were doing, and I of course was delighted to see this historical dwelling. Two carriages took us there: Princess Hélène, Duke George, the lady-in-waiting (Mademoiselle de Bellegarde), one or two other people, and myself. We soon came to a house painted yellow—not very big and quite uninteresting from the outside. I noticed in passing that a workman was occupied in repainting the ironwork on a balcony to make it look like imitation bronze, which was a bad beginning. The Grand Duchess mounted to the first floor, where the chief repairs were going on, followed by the whole company. This floor was composed of several rather low rooms, and the drawing-room, where we stopped to look at the work, presented an unedifying spectacle. The walls were covered with paintings representing hunting scenes in the costume of the time. The Grand Duchess asked me if I liked them. I replied that as the walls had lost every vestige of the old painting and were now covered with new and extremely mediocre modern efforts, I did not feel that they were a great success. The good, excellent Grand Duchess then told me that she had entrusted the work to the son of the priest at Weimar. So, bowing, I replied that it was quite possible that from the point of view of philanthropy the work was very beautiful.

The dado at the base of the pictures was in the pseudo-Chinese style, so frequent in houses of the eighteenth century, and which can have a certain charm where people have respected the note of time, and where the too vivid colours, in fading, melt into the tarnished gold of the mountings, and the outlines, of little interest in them-

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selves, become harmonious with age. Who does not know this style? A little foolish in its details, as every style must be that is based on imitation. But in the Palace of Peter III they were deliberately remaking it all fresh. And the workmen, lying full-length near this dado and directed by some architect or other, or some ignorant official, were doing their best to revive the colours!

Poor Emperor! As a man he wasn't much, but I had the feeling that they were making his memory ridiculous. So when the Grand Duchess, always with her amiable smile, asked me, "Do you like it, M. Wolkoff?" I replied, "I am very sorry, Madame, I do not like it at all."

I tried to explain to the guests the reason of my criticisms, but I do not know if I managed to convince them. When the eyes do not know how to see, no explanation can give them perception. We continued our round of the other rooms, and I had the annoyance to have to make the same reply to the other questions put me by the Grand Duchess. Then Mademoiselle de Bellegarde in great trouble came up to me and said in a low voice, "For mercy's sake say something pleasant."

At this moment I saw a Louis XV lantern with big windows ornamented by a small garland of convolvulus in enamelled bronze. "Ah!" I cried, "there is something really pretty."

The Grand Duchess remained impassive, but it was obvious that the rest of the party thought that I was making a bad joke. The situation was painful, and everyone felt it to be so. Suddenly a brilliant idea occurred to me. "And the doors, Madame, where are they?"

For in truth I saw never a one. Nor did I see any shutters inside for the windows. Do the old doors still exist? Someone hastily inquired, and we were told they had been carried into the cellar.

"Let us go and see them," said the courageous Grand Duchess. Everyone was silent, and I tried to dissuade her because of the stairs. But she insisted; took my arm and down we went, followed by the rest of them. Happily

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the cellar was large and easily accessible, so that the adventure was accomplished without difficulty. Thanks to a grating there was enough light for us to see the doors lying on the floor. They were perfectly lovely.

"There, Madame," I cried, "there are the most beautiful things in the Palace."

And in truth, thanks to their quality, these doors were wonderful. The Grand Duchess ordered that they should be taken out of the cellar. As they could no longer be used for the doorways they had been taken from, as alterations had been made in the openings, something else had to be invented for them. So I suggested that they should be made into great movable screens, put together by brass hinges.

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CHAPTER XXV

One day Countess Levachoff asked me to come and help her. Her niece Countess Panine was expected at any moment, and the question was to make some arrangement with her as pleasantly as possible on the subject of her daughter. She had to be made to understand that the circle she lived amongst was injuring the child's education. "Her mother," said Countess Levachoff, "lives with a Monsieur Petrounkevitch—everybody knows it. And this gentleman collects his family round him. It isn't possible to leave a child who is growing up in such surroundings."

"Try," said the Countess to me, "to make her mother understand that she ought to put the child in the Smolny Institute, and that they will look after her there as well and better than she can do."

I promised Countess Levachoff to help all I could in this family question, as I had already done some years before at Odessa. I remember on that occasion we argued four hours on end, in magnificent moonlight on the Boulevard Richelieu. I remember also that the mother thought that her daughter, aged seven or eight, had very little heart, and was exercised about what to do to develop it. She thought of putting her into a poor village so that she might realise the poverty of the peasants. But I strongly advised her to abandon this project, as the child would certainly love playing with the little peasants, who, though poor, are extremely gay, and have a much more amusing time amongst themselves than rich men's children.

"What on earth shall I do then?" asked the saddened Countess.

"Develop her imagination," I said. "Pity and com-

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miseration are only born in us by the faculty we possess of putting ourselves into the place of those that suffer. But before that faculty can develop, our brains must work and acquire imagination. Make your child read Hoffmann and some of those little English stories so admirably illustrated by Caldecott. Above all, imaginative work."

We had all sat down to lunch about half-past twelve when suddenly Countess Panine appeared, changed but still beautiful. There were only we four, Count and Countess Levachoff, she and I. Straight away the Countess started in, and her niece listened without saying a word.

"You realise, my dear, that the life of a young girl, surrounded by people who aren't married, is not ideal from the point of view of education. Think over the question yourself and you will see we are right."

"Do you think," said Countess Panine, "that it is really so important?"

"Certainly," said Countess Levachoff. "Nothing could be more serious." And her eyes looked very anxious.

"Well, my friends," said Countess Panine, very slowly, "I have come to tell you that I am married."

Count and Countess Levachoff looked their profound consternation. For three minutes no one spoke, all the more that we were not quite sure that it was not a bad joke. But—as Countess Panine remained impassive—the news appeared to be true.

All the plans of the poor Levachoffs went to pieces. For what was tormenting them was not so much the question of the absence of the nuptial ceremony in their niece's domestic affairs, but the class of people by whom she was surrounded and amongst whom the young girl's life must be spent. The absence of marriage was a plausible reason in the eyes of the world for removing her. But what reason could be brought forward to force a mother to confide her child to others, once the marriage was accomplished and known?

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When we got up, Countess Levachoff begged me to go for a walk with Countess Panine in the garden and try to make her put her child into the Smolny Institute. I must allow that I entirely shared the Levachoffs' opinion about the society in which the child's mother moved, but none of us had any real knowledge of the value or worthlessness of these people. All we knew was that Countess Panine, several times a millionaire, was surrounded by the numerous family of a Monsieur Petrounkevitch, with whom she was living, and that they were perhaps very respectable people little—if at all—known in Petersburg society. So—as before at Odessa—there I was walking with the beautiful Countess Panine, trying to make her see that she was in the wrong. But she proved to me that *I* was in the wrong.

"Is there any proof," she asked, "that I have brought up my daughter badly? They want to take her away from me. But by what right, now that I am married?"

So I went back to Countess Levachoff to announce that I had succumbed to Countess Panine's arguments.

But we were in Russia. And Levachoff managed to get an order from the Emperor to put the young Countess Panine in the Smolny Institute and have her brought up there. Against this it was useless to protest. The young Countess Panine became one of the most charming and cultivated young girls in Petersburg. She married, but soon divorced her husband, retaking her maiden name with the consent of the Emperor. She never remarried, and consecrated her whole life to good works. She founded a sort of People's Palace at Petersburg, where there was a Primary School for adults, a lecture-hall, a theatre, a bar where tea, milk, and white bread could be had very cheaply. All this was kept exquisitely clean. There was also a reading-room and a library, but daily papers were not allowed. In winter a company played classical drama there—such, for example, as *Iphigenia in Tauris* and Byron's *Sardanapalus*.

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As she herself looked after this Institution, whose maintenance cost her more than 50,000 roubles a year, she was able to guide it on absolutely cultural lines and to keep it from Socialist contagion.

In 1917 she was the colleague of the Minister of Home Affairs, and looked after all the Women's Institutions; then she was the Assistant to the Minister of Public Instruction, under Kerensky, till the Bolshevik revolution, when she was imprisoned, accused of numberless crimes, and thrown into prison for the supposed embezzlement of 50,000 or 80,000 roubles, till she paid back this sum. Her friends managed to raise the amount by subscription, and she was liberated and stayed at Ekaterinodar till the rout of Denikin, after which she fled abroad.

On the whole, Countess Panine may be considered as one of the rarest and best types of the Russian noble and landed proprietor. No one more than she had the development of the people at heart. Not only did she consecrate her capital and principal revenues to this end, but also her time and her personal work.

I saw her a few years ago at Geneva, living in a little pension at six francs a day, and trying to learn to earn her livelihood as a librarian. She managed to obtain a post at Prague, and she is there with her mother, and she goes on doing all she can to help all the unhappy Russians.

Every time that I went back to Russia I received letters from my cousin Sophie Mamonoff, the only daughter of the eldest of those uncles of whom I have already spoken. She begged me to go and see the Tolstoys while I was over there, and wanted to introduce me to the Countess Tolstoy and her daughter Tatiana Lvovna, with whom she was very intimate. So in 1898 I decided to please my good Sophie, and landed at the station of Toula.

Amongst the crowd there I recognised Count Tolstoy, who was saying good-bye to a young man who looked like an Englishman. Some time after, Tolstoy mounted a horse

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which was waiting for him in the courtyard of the station, and went off.

I took my luggage into the waiting-room, where I washed and changed, and then took one of those horrible town flys, which conveyed me to Jasnaia Poliana, seventeen versts from the station. It was magnificent weather, the road was excellent, and in spite of my miserable horse I arrived in an hour and a half in front of a house surrounded by luxuriant vegetation, without anyone having noticed my arrival, not even the servants. Everybody seemed to be in the garden or in the fields.

Presently Count and Countess Tolstoy, with Sophie Mamonoff, came in, and the latter presented me to them. Their welcome was most amiable, and they assured me that they had wanted to know me for a long time. I was then taken to my room—which I think was the best bedroom, and very spacious and well furnished.

We dined at seven o'clock in the evening, at a very narrow long table, laid under the shade of the great trees. The Countess sat at one end, the Count on her right, and I on her left, opposite the Count. That day two American women dined with us who had just arrived from America. One was young and pretty, the other was older and seemed to be her companion. They intended returning to their own country as soon as possible.

Sitting next to Count Tolstoy, these ladies listened with reverence to his replies to the questions they put to him, which he made with kindness and good-nature, speaking quite comprehensible English.

To my great regret, the two American ladies disappeared that same evening.

At table there were a number of people whom I did not know, besides two or three young sons of Tolstoy and his three daughters. Amongst the well-known men there was Tchertkoff, an intimate friend of the Count, and M. Taniéeff, the Director of the Conservatoire at Moscow. Sitting at the centre of the table there were two Englishmen, of whom one was living at Moscow, an employee in

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the business shops of Muir & Merrilees, and the other an unknown man who had just arrived, who wore two decorations and gave himself airs.

I asked Tolstoy who he was.

"I have not the slightest idea," he said; "but I know that no Englishmen wear decorations, so I cannot understand why this man is wearing them. I cannot make him out," added Tolstoy.

My opinion was that this individual might be anything on earth that one did not want.

That evening we all sat in the drawing-room, and a young Jew—a very good pianist—began to play. The Count played chess, the Countess copied her husband's manuscripts, and I listened to the music, while talking to Sophie at the other end of the room. The post arrived, and Tolstoy gave me a paper, on the cover of which I recognised the photograph of the Englishman, dressed in an Arabian or Moroccan costume. I did not gather what the paper was about, but the title was "Fifty Countries." It looked like the advertisement of a merchant who had brought things to sell, or a traveller who had visited fifty countries, but in any case was the description of a gentleman who did business, and it was clear that his journey to the Count was meant to profit him one way or the other. On arriving at the house, he had assured Tolstoy that he was hunting for "moral peace," but had not yet found it.

Jasnaia Poliana was open to the world; decent people were rather afraid of going there, and others came without being invited and settled down without the slightest compunction, thanks to a hospitality which was exceptional even in Russia—and passed very agreeable days there.

The next day I got up early and went to make a morning visit to M. Taniéeff, who was living in a house within the park grounds. He was taking his coffee and reading the score of *Parsifal*.

When I came back to the house, I was astonished to see

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Tolstoy dressed in an excellent blue dressing-gown, with elegant bedroom slippers on his feet. During the day he wore a blouse of cream-coloured linen, like the French painters wear, and which made him look clean and neat. It has often been said that Tolstoy, to please the people, wore Russian blouses and walked about barefoot, but this fable seems to have been born in the minds of those unfamiliar with the blouses he did wear, and who confused them with "la roubachka." To a stranger's eyes, these blouses were certainly more attractive than a suit bought at Toula would have been.

I breakfasted in the garden with Tatiana Lvovna, the eldest daughter of Tolstoy. The Englishman with the decorations came up and joined us. He astonished me by the impudence with which he treated people. "Give me the bread"—"pass me the sugar"—"pour me out a cup of tea": never "please" or "thank you" accompanying his orders.

"I should like to see a Russian pope at home," he said to Tatiana Lvovna. "I should like you to take me to one of them."

She was so good and kind that she was almost consenting, when I begged her, in Russian, not to do it.

After lunch the Count and Countess and I went for a walk in a pretty wood. Two of the younger sons sometimes walked in front and sometimes behind us. As we went along, the Countess said quite aloud that her sons had no scruple in discussing before their parents the manner in which—after their death—they would divide up the property. The sons heard this and smiled.

About four o'clock, when all the young people of the party were playing at lawn tennis, and Tchertkoff astonished me by his excellent performance, the Countess, Sophie, and I were sitting in the shade on a bench placed a few feet off the ground, whilst on the other side, on a chair, in the full blaze of the sun and without a hat, Count Tolstoy was sitting.

The Englishman had already taken possession of him,

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and placing his chair next his host, asked him questions without ceasing. Sometimes he would bend forward to the ear of the Count, and then he would draw back to see what he had written in a little note-book.

The patience of Tolstoy astonished me all the more that he did not look pleased, and not being able to bear it any longer, he at last rose and came straight to me.

"This person asks me such intimate questions," he said, "that I really don't know how to answer them," and thereupon he sat down near me.

"You are too good," I said; "you should not answer anything to this disgusting creature; and I am going to see that he leaves this evening."

"But how on earth will you do it?"

"You will see," said I.

That evening we dined again under the shade of the trees, and everyone was talking.

"I can answer for my daughters," said the Countess, "because I brought them up; but I cannot answer for my sons, who follow their father, and, like him, change their ideas every week."

The Count listened and smiled.

All of a sudden I turned to the Englishman, who was sitting some distance from me in the middle of the table.

"Mr. ——" (I cannot remember his name), "did you ever hear anyone speak of a Dr. Brown?"

This innocent question produced a surprising effect on the Englishman, and he replied with an embarrassed "Yes."

"Who is the gentleman you are talking about?" asked Tolstoy, astonished.

"He is an Englishman who does himself rather well. He is a speculator, well known in Switzerland—a doctor of something or the other—who, under the pretence of showing Switzerland to his compatriots, does good business with the hotel-keepers and makes a nice pile for himself."

The Englishman was silent, and for a short time no one

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said anything. When we got up, Tolstoy said, "It is astonishing how you managed to shut him up with a mere nothing."

"It is because he understood that someone suspected him of being one of those individuals who, under the pretence of doing a certain thing, is doing something quite different."

He disappeared that same evening.

Up till then my relations with Tolstoy had been most agreeable, but the next day I had a most painful discussion with him about Wagner. I had no idea what Tolstoy had written about his operas, and the discussion went so far that when he declared to me that Wagner was a "Bürger Allemand" (a middle-class German) without the slightest capacity for art, I ventured myself to point out to him that the word "bourgeois" which he implied, to depreciate Wagner, had no meaning at all, and that in any case it was pointless in the mouth of a Tolstoy, for whom no social positions existed—neither noble, nor bourgeois, nor peasant.

"I think, dear Count, that we shall never agree on this subject, and I should prefer to leave, all the more that I have now encroached on your hospitality for three days."

"But what an idea!" he replied. "I do hope that you are not annoyed."

"No; but I think it is time to go."

As in this house everyone could order what they pleased, I went to the stables, where I found a splendid bearded coachman and told him to harness a carriage and take me away in an hour. I was told there were eighteen horses in the stables.

From there, I went to say good-bye to everyone, and when the carriage was at the door of the house, everyone —the Count and Countess with their children—came and took leave of me, begging me to stay on.

When I think of it to-day, I cannot understand my reasons for going; but it happened like that, and I went off to the station at Toula in an excellent carriage with

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two splendid horses which had cost 1,500 roubles apiece, so the coachman told me.

I carried away from Jasnaia Poliana a very sad impression.

Amongst writers, there are two classes. One depends on his intellect, and the other on his verbal memory and imagination. A remarkable verbal memory has need of very little intelligence (that is to say, very little of the capacity for connecting cause and effect) to write admirable romances and novels. A great intellect, with no verbal memory, would be quite incapable of doing so.

Tolstoy had a passionate nature, a compassionate heart, and an admirable verbal memory, with a lively imagination, but his intelligence was far from being exceptional. His passionate nature always made him prone to exaggeration, and his personal life was spent in struggling with his own exaggerations. The general public—which is always ready to judge of the intelligence of an author by the impression that is made on it by the logical nature of the situations described in a novel, and their development—has generally a false idea of the intelligence of the writer. It is this quality which strikes it first, and it is this quality which it ceases to admire the most quickly in literary works, even when it continues to recognise certain literary qualities.

In his work *What is Art?*, Tolstoy, who, in the name of truth, never spares himself, loses his way in a labyrinth of contradictory ideas and never seems able to get out, in spite of the fifteen years which he employed—according to his own confession—in trying to emerge. The subjectivity which he is unable to shake off, and which makes his charm and his force wherever poetic licence prevails, paralyses the attitude of an impartial judge which he would like to fancy he incarnated.

In the domain of criticism, where the chief question is to pronounce judgment, his subjectivity neither permits him to realise his own contradictions nor, on the other hand, to realise the insufficiency of the premises which

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serve as a basis for his theses, and he ends by speaking with pity of "those unhappy people whose intelligence is atrophied by the study of experimental science."

I cannot believe that blindness of spirit has often passed the limits of this phrase, and his work *What is Art?* seems to have been written expressly to prove the tragic results of such a theory.

The discipline that is gained by the study of experimental science—and which Tolstoy holds in contempt—far from atrophying his intelligence, would have put him on his guard. Perhaps he would have lost as a poet, but his critical powers would have gained.

As the constant occupation of the man of science is to discover truth by experience, and to verify by experience the result of speculative deductions, the analyst philosopher may be said to be in the most favourable position for learning how to mistrust approximate deductions and to habituate himself to a precision that no other discipline could give him.

How often has examination contradicted what an incomplete deduction imagined it had explained! "Wisdom is the daughter of experience." "There is no certainty where mathematical science cannot be applied, or where mathematical truths are not bound up with the result." "Let no one read me who is not a mathematician; he will not be with me in my principles." Thus speaks one of the greatest artists and thinkers of humanity, Leonardo da Vinci.

The stamp of childishness that one remarks so often in the way that the most eminent men understand and criticise things which are not quite their speciality is due to the absence of this spirit, which is made circumspect by experimental research. The history of human nature presents examples which no one can ignore, in support of this truth.

Tolstoy, surrounded by a group of people who flattered him, but of whom very few were distinguished men, listened by preference to the arguments of Tchertkoff

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because they seemed to him sincere, and also because they came from a well-bred man—in a word, a gentleman. A phrase that Madame Pachkoff repeated to me one day revealed a whole world on this subject.

The wife of Tchertkoff (a Mlle Dietrichs) said one day to Madame Pachkoff, "Do you know why Tolstoy listens to Tchertkoff?"

"Why?"

"Because he is an aristocrat."

Tired of his own contradictions, Tolstoy preferred to listen to the opinions of an eccentric creature who at least was dominated by the appearance of something stable—though perhaps vainly—rather than to those restless seekers of whom he himself was the most complete example.

During a visit I paid to Countess Nathalie Solloghoub, a good friend of mine, on her estate near Serpouhoff, I met many people I knew, amongst whom I found Soloviev. We had all to spend the night there and Soloviev and I shared a room. We argued nearly the whole night through, he lying on one bed and I on the other, without, however, convincing each other. He maintained that Russia ought to submit to the Pope, whereas I of course considered it perfectly unnecessary. He believed Freemasonry to be the great danger of the world, and I thought such a theory exaggerated. But we remained excellent friends, and next day it occurred to me that I would like to paint him. He had magnificent eyes, forehead, and hair, though the lower part of his face was weak and covered with a rather insignificant beard. I made a water-colour of him which I gave to Kitty Levachoff. I wish I had it, as he was a most interesting man, and his book *La Russie et l'Église Universelle* has always, rightly, had a considerable reputation.

One day on my arriving at Petersburg, the first person who greeted me was Sabouroff, who told me that there was

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talk of my son Gabriel getting married. This news, coming from a friend like Andrei Alexandrovitch, an eminent lawyer whose straight dealing and fine nature were known to the whole of Russia, had of course to be taken seriously.

"When—and to whom?" I asked.

"To a Miss Taniéeff."

"And who wants it? Perhaps it is her parents, whom I have not the pleasure of knowing."

"No," replied Sabouroff; "it is more important than that. It is the young Empress who would like it. The reason as everyone knows is because your son is often at Tsarkoe Selo when Miss Taniéeff is there, and it appears that the Empress has made several snapshots of them together."

I knew that the Empress had always been very good to Gabriel, who was a lieutenant on board the ship that the Imperial family used every year when sailing about the Gulf of Finland. I asked Gabriel what truth there was in these rumours.

"Whether they want to marry me, or whether they don't," he said, laughing, "I know that it's not *I* who am going to marry Miss Taniéeff. If you want to know the reason, tell Nicholas to invite her to lunch, sit by her, and talk to her."

My son Nicholas, already married and the father of a family, was living at Tsarkoe Selo.

Next day I lunched with Miss Taniéeff. She was small, ugly, and stupid. I understood my son's point of view. Some time afterwards she married Mr. Vyrouboff, but they were soon divorced.

Now that we know the sinister rôle that Madame Vyrouboff played in the last years of Russian history by introducing the blackguard Rasputin into the Imperial Court, I sometimes wonder whether it would not have been better for the welfare of the country that the Empress's wish should have been fulfilled. Perhaps my son would have stood up against this extravagant neuras-

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thenic, and could have counteracted her influence on the Imperial couple.

Having no memory for Christian names, being by nature terribly absent-minded, and having lived much abroad, I often found myself in embarrassing situations when I was in Russia and had to address my interlocutor by his name. For not only is it necessary to remember each individual's name, but also that of his father. No one introducing one person to another would neglect to add both to the surname. All that has changed a good deal of late years, particularly at Petersburg, and people often content themselves, even when speaking Russian, to add only the word "Gospodin" (Mr.). But in the country they still stick to the baptismal names, and one often meets those who remember the two Christian names of people whose surnames they have forgotten.

The young Empress, the wife of Nicholas II, invited me one day to Tsarkoe Selo. When I got to the station I found a much liveried footman who took me to the waiting carriage, and we went off. But scarcely had we gone a few hundred yards when the carriage stopped at a cross-road, and the servant got off the box to ask me to which of the Empresses he was to take me—Maria Feodorowna or Alexandra Feodorowna. This unexpected question appalled me, for at the moment I had confused the two names in my memory and could not remember which was which. The moment was painful, and I was in terror that I should betray my ignorance to the servant, when suddenly the idea came into my head to say, "To the young Empress," and the situation was saved.

The Empress wanted to see me to thank me for a water-colour I had sent her for her bazaar for the poor. She knew two of my sons and had heard about me from her aunt, Princess Louise of England, so that we had lots to talk about.

I understood well how "out of it" and forlorn this beautiful but shy young woman must have found herself

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in the centre of a Court to whose customs she could scarcely adapt herself, with a husband incapable of making her understand them, and in a country where the old Empress —her mother-in-law—was so popular and still played so great a part.

The Empress talked to me with great affability and openness. Sometimes she got up, and we walked about the room looking at the water-colours on the walls; and sometimes we sat down and continued our conversation. After the visit had lasted about half an hour, I thought I was doing right in holding out my hand so as to let the Empress give me the chance of kissing hers. She took me to the door of the room, thanking me effusively.

My friends called my attention to the fact that it wasn't my place to have held out my hand. I knew that. But it seemed to me, after our frank conversation, exempt from all etiquette, the shyness of that charming young woman would have made it difficult for her to find the best way to let me know it was time to go.

Each time that I went through Moscow, the appearance of the Palace where the Grand Duke Serge (then Governor-General of that city) lived, annoyed my feelings as a European. I could not reconcile the state in which the balcony of the palace was with the character of the charming Grand Duchess Elizabeth. On the façade of a large house of perfectly simple architecture, painted yellow, the only place that the eye could rest on with curiosity, though perhaps not with interest, was a balcony on the first floor. This was gilded, and every baluster was composed of several pieces of metal, one on the top of the other, and twisted on the same iron stands, more or less in the Renaissance style; but they were all out of place, one turned to the left, another to the right, and in a great many places the iron bars were divested of their ornaments. This beautiful balcony had a dismantled air, as if there had been a bombardment or an earthquake. It had

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remained in this condition for three years, because each year I went through Moscow I noticed it.

This state of things in the house of the Grand Duke, uncle to the Emperor, seemed to my eyes the emblem of Russia. It revealed carelessness and indolence. It is impossible to believe that the Grand Duke and the military men and dignitaries who were always with him did not notice what the rest of the world did. Everybody said, "Nitchevo!" ("It is not my affair"). That was the careless attitude of everyone. Then the servants who swept the balcony, how could it be possible that they did not notice that each baluster was awry. Of course they did, but rather than *do* anything, they preferred to say "Nitchevo!"—which was indolence.

All this was clear to me; but I could not understand the indifference of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth to such a thing. She was a woman with English blood in her veins, and was an artist at heart. How could she, whenever she cast her eyes on this balcony, see its condition without protesting.

One day this enigma was explained to me. It was at the time of the war with Japan. In the Kremlin Palace the whole of the Red Cross of Moscow was united under the Presidency of the Grand Duchess to arrange about making the thousands of articles necessary for the wounded.

Mademoiselle Maria Nikolaevna Ermoloff asked me one day to go and see the remarkable work of the Croix Rouge, and as I did not want to meet the Grand Duchess, she assured me that she never came before eleven o'clock. I went to the Kremlin at ten, and after having gone through the rooms and talked with several people of my acquaintance, I was just going out when I saw the Grand Duchess coming in. So that I might not be seen by her, I passed quickly by the other end of the immense hall, where I saw her speaking to several ladies who were working at the entrance.

Suddenly, accompanied by the first lady-in-waiting, Ekaterina Petrovna Ermoloff, she came towards me. I

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could no longer escape and I was presented to her. "Look!" said Ekaterina Petrovna, showing me a drawing. "Her Imperial Highness has drawn the design for a uniform for the Sisters. It is to her that we owe these practical clothes; we copied her designs exactly."

The designs were drawn by a master-hand, and I expressed my sincere admiration to the Grand Duchess, but at the same time I said to Mademoiselle Ermoloff that the dresses were not in the least like the design.

"How do you mean?" she said.

"But—look," I said. "The shape is quite different. The place for the pocket is not the same as in the design. Here you have folds—there you have none."

This lady and the others, astonished by my remarks, protested, but the Grand Duchess was silent.

Never shall I forget the look she gave me—so sweet, so penetrating, and so certain. I understood that she was exactly of my opinion, but she did not want to contradict the other ladies.

I found that the design was so beautifully done that I asked her permission to keep it as a souvenir.

"No, no! It is not well enough made—I will draw you a better one."

I never saw her again, that sweet figure of a woman, for the next day I had to leave Moscow; but on going back to my hotel I wrote to Mademoiselle Ermoloff (either the aunt or the niece, I cannot remember which) and explained to her the phenomenon of the balcony. . . . The Grand Duchess did not protest because she was tired—tired—tired at not being understood.

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CHAPTER XXVI

For a long time people had told me that I was going to receive a majorat (an entailed estate) somewhere in Russia. I never took it seriously, but at last one day my son Nicholas came to see me when I was staying with the Levachoffs, and insisted that we ought to investigate these rumours.

"My dear," I said, "if there is something entailed in my name, it is a very simple matter to find it out, because it can only have been done thanks to a ukase of the Emperor to the Senate. Go yourself, and hunt for this ukase, if it exists."

Nicholas went down to the Senate and came back in company with the Senator Trochimosky, a man who had been a student with me at Dorpat and whom I had not seen for thirty years. They brought me some numbers of the *Journal* which the Senate published at that time, in which there was a notice about me.

My father's cousin, Leonid Matvéevitch Mouromtzoff, Grand Marshal to the government of Riazan, married to a Princess Golitzine, had asked the Emperor to convert his estate into an entail which was to pass to me in case his son—also married to a Princess Golitzine—died without a child. In virtue of a ukase of the Emperor given in the Senate on the 12th of November 1890, this majorat was instituted, under the condition that I could only inherit if I added the name Mouromtzoff to mine and united the arms of the two families. Senator Trochimosky, who had examined the documents, told me that the Wolkoff in question could only be myself, as I am the grandson of the Madame Wolkoff, born a Mouromtzoff, who was named in the document. So that the rumours which were

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going about on the subject of this entail received confirmation.

What seemed to me odd, however, was that Mouromtzoff had not thought of communicating his projects to me, nor mentioned the ukase, which had been issued five years before. It can easily be understood, after having learnt this, that I wanted to go and see him to thank him, but his silence prevented my going. I consulted Countess Levachoff and the charming Baron Winspeare, who was staying with her at this time. The Countess was of opinion that I ought not to make this visit, because it might be interpreted as merely coming from a desire to find out the value of the property, or even to inquire about the health of Mouromtzoff and his son.

I did not share this view, and I decided to write to my uncle to thank him for his choice, and to ask him if he would allow me to pay him a visit. Baron Winspeare, who was much interested in the question of this majorat, gave me some good advice. "When you go to see your uncle and his house, do not criticise anything, but say that everything is charming. Don't forget that he might still choose another heir."

At the moment of the coronation of Nicholas II, my uncle Mouromtzoff was the doyen of the Grand Marshals of the nobility, and, owing to this, represented that nobility in the eyes of the Emperor.

The Emperor wanted to know more about the general position of these nobles, and also the best way to help them, and asked the opinion of Mouromtzoff. My uncle described the sad state of the small landed gentry, and attributed it, in part, to the habit of Russian parents of dividing their lands between all their children. The result was a progressive whittling down of estates, until at last the day came when the portions obtained could no longer support the proprietors.

Nicholas II having asked how this kind of thing could be remedied, my uncle replied that the introduction of entails would help to a certain extent, by enabling at

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least one member of the family to take his part of the inheritance seriously and to make a good thing of it.

The introduction of entails would be less necessary in big than in small properties, but would become more important as the estates were progressively divided up, and he thought it would be a good plan to settle on a minimum of acres, below which the property was not allowed to be divided.

According to the different Russian provinces, and taking into consideration the different quality of the soil, this figure would have to be variable, but he thought that an average of 1,500 to 3,000 acres could be considered as a minimum. The rational development of these small properties could be only secured if their possessors could rely on holding some definite amount of land.

This idea pleased the Emperor, and he requested Mouromtzoff to form a Committee to carry it out, and my uncle started at once. But, in my opinion, entail is so contrary to Russian sentiments that I do not think it would have been possible to introduce it. The title belongs to every member of the family and the property is divided between them. That is the reason why there are so few historical souvenirs kept, even in very old houses. As these souvenirs have to be distributed, they lose their value because the inheritors only get isolated objects and do not take any further interest in them.

In reply to my letter I had a charming telegram from Mouromtzoff, who invited me to come to Balovnevo. I therefore started and arrived at Dankoff, where a carriage with four horses was waiting for me.

Dankoff is a sad little town, but one has to drive right through it before getting to the road which runs to Balovnevo, nine versts off.

The servant who sat on the box showed me the boundaries of his master's estate. There was an excellent road running through splendid fields of potatoes which stretched away as far as the eye could reach. The idea that it

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might all be mine some day filled my soul with joy, and I could understand how such a possibility would impress anyone who had the chance of getting such a property and almost make him a murderer in his heart. I was glad that I did not suffer from such feelings and happy to be able to admire everything that was admirable, without my enthusiasm depending on the idea of possession, simply because of my passion for agriculture.

In the middle of a magnificent courtyard, at the bottom of the staircase of a beautiful house, Mouromtzoff and his wife received me like real relations and took me in.

"I thank you most sincerely for your choice," I said, "but I shall not dwell on it overmuch. You may quite possibly have a direct heir, and I wish it for you with all my heart. It is not the first time that a great fortune seemed to be coming to us out of the sky, and then disappeared; yet we are perfectly happy, as you see, my dear uncle."

Without answering he kissed me affectionately and pressed my hand, after which they took me all over the house.

It was a large and fine building of two storeys, joined from either side by open galleries constructed on arcades, and with two big wings. The wing on the left contained the kitchens and servants' quarters, and the one on the right—with accommodation for visitors—consisted of eight different suites of apartments, of which some had several rooms.

The rooms on the ground floor were all vaulted, with extremely thick walls, so that even in July and August it was cool. The staircase which led up to the first floor was very wide, in white marble, with a gilt-bronze balustrade. All the rooms were spacious, and the ball-room was remarkable for its beautiful and original cornice. There was a big library of French novels, and an interesting collection of eighteenth-century Russian books, with the beautiful binding of the period.

On the whole, there were a lot of beautiful things, but

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THE HOUSE, BALOVNEVO

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also plenty in really bad taste. In the library of my grandfather, the big table and the magnificent chairs, almost black with time, were splendid in form and colour, but the furniture of the other rooms, which was in walnut, with carved mounts, vases of Sèvres, and sofas upholstered in yellow satin with blue fringe—all that was not to my taste.

They were very proud of their pictures. Amongst the collection they showed me, some bore the names of great masters, but in reality they were only very mediocre copies, and I thought that my dear relations did not know much about the difference that existed between originals and copies. However, I liked one quite lovely picture—the portrait of the wife of my great-grandfather, painted by Levitsky. I should never have thought that the artist could have made so fine a portrait, and this I told my uncle. It appears that the authorities asked him if this portrait might be included in the great Exhibition of Russian Portraits that had been held at Petersburg, but this he refused.

"On the whole," said my aunt, "what do you think, my dear Alexander, of each of these pictures, taken one by one? Here is the portrait of the wife of Alexander I, painted by Rosselin. How do you like it?"

"Not much," I said, as I was not sure it was not a copy.

"And that one?" said my aunt.

"It is quite a good copy."

"That one?"

"Again, a copy."

"What!—nothing but copies, you think."

"But—yes, simply copies."

"Now, that one—I assure you that that is not a copy. What do you think of it?"

"That one ought to be burnt."

"Thank you, my dear Alexander. *I* did that one."

"Well, it didn't succeed, my dear aunt," I said, kissing her hand.

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Mouromtzoff listened and smiled, but his wife bore me a grudge. I remembered what Winspeare had said, but it was too late.

I asked them if they thought it was desirable that I should make the acquaintance of their son, who lived with his wife, thirty versts off. They declared that it was useless, so I did not go there, and used my spare time to go and see the park, where the beautiful oaks astonished me. I had never seen such beautiful trees: there was nothing stunted about them; enormous branches spread from them, four metres above the ground.

Two large ponds, surrounded by luxuriant vegetation, struck me by the difference which existed between their levels. The one on the north was 100 feet above that on the south. The park was bounded on three sides by large orchards, and a beautiful church stood on the fourth side. A pretty tower, with a chiming clock, brought up the water-supply to the house from the middle of the park.

I dined and spent the evening at Balovnevo, and was to go early next morning to catch the train.

My relations with Mouromtzoff remained excellent. Later on, my daughter and my wife spent a few days at Balovnevo and were very well received.

Soon afterwards Mouromtzoff's son died, and a few years later my uncle succumbed to a stroke. I was at Venice at the time, but directly I got back to Russia I went to visit the widow, who was ill in bed. I stayed there for several days, and wanted to avail myself of the occasion to make acquaintance with my cousin, the widow of Mouromtzoff's son. When my aunt heard of my intention, she told me that she had a great prayer to address to me. Her son was buried at Balovnevo, she said, in that part of the cemetery which was around the church, but his widow wanted to disinter the body and take it home with her, so as to build a church over the remains. "I pray you, my dear Alexander," said my aunt, "to promise me that you will never allow this."

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"My dear aunt," I replied, "I cannot promise anything without having first seen your daughter-in-law and heard the reasons she has for wishing to change the habitation of her husband."

I went to see my cousin, whom I found quite nice, but quite off her head on the subject of the construction of churches. At that time she was building a wall to surround four churches, of which she herself, I think, had erected two. One might have thought at first that she was mad, but on the whole she was clever, with a great deal of humour.

She also had founded a convent, containing one hundred nuns, who worked in the fields around the convent.

"My dear cousin," she said, "how do you like this church that I have just finished?"—showing me a very oddly-shaped church.

"The tower, without a top to it," I said, "looks like a cannon pointed at the heavens."

"You are right," she replied, and the idea pleased her.

I do not really know how the idea could have pleased her, unless it suggested to her fancy a cannon sending up to the heavens the prayers offered in the church.

I lunched with her and four of her nuns, and did not scruple to make them laugh by my remarks, which were sometimes very daring and even improper; my cousin roared with laughter.

At last she began to speak of her husband, and her wish to re-bury his body in a certain place and build a church over it.

"Tell me, my dear cousin," she said, "who has the more right to the mortal remains of a man—his wife or his mother?"

"His wife," I said.

"Thank you very much. I shall count on you, because without your authority I could not act."

After breakfast she showed me over her house, where there was nothing of much interest, and then took me into the church, which was not yet finished, to show me a

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picture, which, according to the opinion of everyone, was beginning to work miracles.

"You understand how serious this is for us," she said, "because it will bring wealth to us."

"But you," I said, "who build churches, one after the other—what difference does it make to you?"

"It brings me in money," she said, "and money is always necessary."

This woman was certainly an interesting type, worthy of being studied by a writer who had plenty of time to spare, but as I was not a writer and had not any time to lose, I tried to understand her in my own way. In my opinion, she was a person suffering from megalomania.

She saw grandeur in the construction of churches and the submission of a hundred nuns, simple peasants who looked upon her as a superior creature and were ready to lick her boots. People told me the following curious story.

One nun, having been guilty of some carelessness, threw herself on her knees before my cousin to ask her pardon. She—who was some way off—cried to the nun, "Crawl—crawl—crawl!", till she was at her feet.

I think that even the desire to possess the body of her husband was nothing but a pretext to construct another church. It appeared that the Government was beginning to worry about these churches, and thought that four were already more than enough. Perhaps she believed that they would take into consideration her religious sentiments and her love for the dead man, and that they would give her permission to erect a fifth church over his body.

When I said good-bye to her she did not forget to insist on her right to have the man disinterred and to take him home.

Back at Balovnevo, the first words my aunt addressed to me were on this subject.

"My dear aunt," I said, "I must admit that, according to my convictions, the wife, more than the mother, has

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a right to the body of her husband, so that if your daughter-in-law insists, I cannot oppose her desire."

This upset my aunt terribly. I tried to tranquillise her by assuring her that there was very little chance that the tragedy would be realised, and that I would do all in my power to make the Government oppose it; but everything was useless, and thereafter she had such a grudge against me that she did not scruple, during the year longer that she lived, to give orders to the detriment of the income which I might hope to receive from Balovnevo.

My aunt died in the autumn, while I was ill in Petersburg, and not being able myself to go to the country, I sent my two eldest sons. Almost directly I received from Nicholas a twenty-line telegram, telling me that if I did not come at once, we should lose enormous sums, so I went.

Arrived at Balovnevo, I found all sorts of intrigues going on between various people, some of whom had rights, the others none.

After I had dealt with the principal questions relating to the inheritance, I went back to Petersburg, very ill. Not wanting, in this state, to visit the Levachoffs, I went to the hotel, and straight to bed. The doctor found I was seriously indisposed, and the excellent Countess Levachoff, having heard of it, insisted upon taking me to her house. I stayed two months in bed, splendidly nursed by my friends and their servants. No less than six doctors came to see me, but did not discover what was wrong with me, although I suffered horribly. After every eight respirations I felt as if somebody stopped my nose and mouth for several seconds, and I could not breathe. The doctors were certain that it was nerves and had nothing to do with any organic lesion or wrong condition. However, my state was so intolerable that I really felt like blowing out my brains.

The good Kitty Levachoff, deaf and dumb, used sometimes to come and sit at the head of my bed, but as, to get her to understand, I had to make exaggerated move-

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ments with my lips, I could not stand it, and begged her each time to go. Every now and then Madame Yonine came and cried through the door, "Go away! go away! if you don't want the doctors to kill you here, as they killed my husband."

My eldest sons were with me, and soon my wife came. At last, after two months of agony, she took me to Dresden, and from there I travelled with my daughter to consult doctors in other places, but without finding improvement or cure. At Bologna the celebrated Murri advised me to go to Rapallo and walk about in the sun. I went, but with no good result. After several months of travelling, I decided to come back to our house at Venice and continue to suffer. Tired of hearing all these sons of Æsculapius attribute my illness to the state of my nerves, I finally begged my Venetian doctor to give me the most modern book he could find on intestinal illnesses, for long since I had suspected the existence of some relations between my present state and my intestines.

He brought me the work of Boas, which I immediately began to study. Little by little I acquired the conviction that my suspicions were well founded, and to satisfy myself I went to Zurich and settled in the Sanatorium of Pestalozzi, having arranged with the doctor in charge that he would treat me by the Ebstein method. The latter was a celebrated doctor, a professor at the university of Göttingen.

My wife and my daughter went to Balovnevo, and soon letters came from my daughter, saying that my presence was indispensable. As I felt better after two or three weeks' treatment, I decided to risk the long journey and started for Russia.

When I got to Balovnevo, I soon began to revive under the influence of Nature, which is charming here in Russia in the summer. We installed ourselves very comfortably, although the difficulty of finding good servants was great. As soon as the Emancipation was an accomplished fact, the number of servants that the nobility were accustomed

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to have was much reduced. We had to send away the cook, but we kept the head butler, a sly fox, who had served my uncle since his childhood, and also had to get other servants—Esthonian housemaids from Petersburg, and cooks who left much to be desired, for no one wanted to take places for a few months only.

Up to this time we were actually but not legally the proprietors of Balovnevo; to be so in law, we had to go through a lot of formalities, of which the first consisted in presenting a document proving the fact that my grandmother was born a Mouromtzoff, and that she was the aunt of the man who had founded the entail. This was not easy, because in those days the name of the wife was not mentioned in any of the official papers concerning the husband. This was only to be found in the church where the marriage had been celebrated. Russia having no Consistory-General for the whole of the country, it was necessary to find out in what town or in what church my grandfather had married his wife. It would have taken years to hunt up these towns in fifty different governments. Priests at the Consistory of Petersburg, to whom I applied, admitted that the problem was insoluble.

By a happy chance I suddenly learnt that the brother of my grandmother, Matthew Mouromtzoff, had written his Memoirs, in which he spoke of the marriage of his sister, and described how, on going to the church, he had met the Emperor Paul, who was at Moscow for his coronation.

By this means I learnt that the year of the marriage was 1797, and that the city where it took place was Moscow. Unfortunately the name of the church was not indicated, whilst the description of the place where the meeting with the Grand Duke had happened might apply to the locality of a hundred churches, for at the moment it appeared there were more than five hundred at Moscow.

However, I went to Moscow and began my search. Armed with a description of Mouromtzoff and with the book in which it was published, I went from one church

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to the other, asking the deacons and priests to allow me to examine the books for the year 1797. It was really a comedy. All the ecclesiastics dined an hour after midday, after which they lay down. I, however, entered without ceremony into their rooms, woke them up, and showed them the page of the book which spoke of the locality, and begged them to help me.

I admit that they astonished me by their good-nature. Not once did they refuse to get up, take me to the church, and give me the old books for the year 1797.

Between the hours of three o'clock and five I often found the priests sitting in a little garden drinking their tea round a samovar, and even then they were always amiable. From morning until evening I deciphered old, scarcely readable writing, but what was most vexing was to read the long description of all the decorations and orders which the defunct had, and which might perfectly apply to my grandfather, to find, when one came to the end, that they only belonged to the master of some servant or serving-girl who was marrying.

After three days of unfruitful and painful work I began to be discouraged, when a priest came up to me and said that I should never find what I wanted, because the nobility always married in private chapels and never in the big churches of the town.

I then resolved to address myself to the Consistory of Moscow, and went there an hour after midday.

In a great hall, full of employees and clerks, I began to describe my troubles very loudly, begging them to come and help me.

All the copies of the marriage certificates for that city were given to the Consistory, so several clerks began to make researches, but after one or two hours' work they told me that the number of churches burnt down in 1812 was so great that it really was no use going on. So I saw there was nothing left for me to do but to present to the Consistory a petition in the ordinary way. But those who know Russia will realise the time that I should have

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to wait for an official reply, and how much this reply would depend on the good-will of the clerks charged with the research. Therefore I had to employ other means—means which I have always found successful in Russia. To succeed in an affair of this sort one must try to interest the clerks directly, and to do this, it is most important to know which particular individual to address. One must find a man who has the most knowledge on the subject in hand, and is the most greedy amongst these. One recognises such a man by two signs—a red nose and a pen behind his ear. A person may be quite sure that a clerk of this kind knows more than his chief, and that for a small remuneration he will arrange the matter. It is not a question of an illegal or fishy business, but a matter which would have taken an ordinary individual weeks or months, and which, thanks to such a gentleman, would be finished in a few days.

I found the man with the red nose and his pen behind his ear. I made him a sign to come out with me into the ante-chamber.

"Up to what time do you work in the evening?" I said.

"Until four o'clock," he replied.

"Very well. I propose that after four o'clock you should look up for me the marriage certificate of my grandfather, Stephan Nikolaevitch Wolkoff, with my grandmother, Alexandra Matweievna Mouromtzoff. The man who finds it and brings it to me to-day before seven o'clock will receive twenty-five roubles."

At half past six the same evening the document that I wanted so much was delivered at my door.

Many of my friends, having been told of this episode, scolded me, saying that they could not understand how I could offer only twenty-five roubles for such an important document.

I explained to them that twenty-five roubles were quite enough to achieve the result, if there were any possibility of success; whereas had I offered the man a big sum, the idea might have come into his head that it was a matter

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of immense importance, and that would have inspired him with the thought of selling the document at God knew what price.

When we got back to Balovnevo I experienced great difficulty with the servant question. This assumed such proportions that at last we thought it more practical to take our Italian servants all the way to Russia, so two housemaids, a cook, and a valet used to accompany us to Balovnevo. Even the aboriginal coachman was no use, and we were obliged to send for a Finn from Petersburg, who knew how to train horses, and with whom we were very well pleased.

The church at Balovnevo, which my grandfather had had built by Italian workmen, was very remarkable for its size, and also for certain details which are not found in Orthodox churches. He had put in statues, although they are not admitted in the Orthodox Church, also a holy-water stoup, as in the Roman churches. A special place was prepared for the masters of Balovnevo, in a recess ornamented with a white marble chimney-piece. The flooring of this recess was two steps above the rest of the church.

The little garden which surrounded the part of the church in which the servants of the proprietors were buried was encircled by well-cut green hedges and was beautifully kept up. My ancestor was laid in the crypt of the church.

Taking into consideration that Balovnevo had become an entail, I thought it was necessary to construct a mausoleum for the members of the family, quite close to the church, in the confines of the park.

Only a Russian can understand the extreme sentiments of well-being inspired by a property whose masters have kept it in good order. The reason is that, generally, neither proprietors nor their agents have the faintest idea of how to do this. Balovnevo, where my uncle had spent all his summers for the last twenty-four years, where he fulfilled the functions of the Grand Marshal of the

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THE CHURCH, BALOVNEVO

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Nobility to the Government at Riasan, was in remarkably good order.

The property was superintended by two agents, of whom one, an old Pole whom my uncle had managed to liberate from Siberia, was an excellent agriculturist. The other was his assistant, a young Russian called Sokoloff, who had studied agriculture in the Agricultural School of Moghileff.

Apart from the order established at Balovnevo, the place had exceptional qualities from the point of view of natural beauty.

In an undulating landscape, covered as far as the eye could reach by splendid fields, one could see here and there the remains of gardens belonging to properties, now disappeared, which had been bought long ago by the masters of Balovnevo. On one side of the park there were remains of a garden which had belonged to a family called Bibikoff, which was very beautiful, possessing a splendid avenue of ash and lime, and surrounded by thirty acres of apple trees. There was a pretty little church there, in the Italian style of the sixteenth century, surrounded by all the tombs of the Bibikoff family, completely overgrown with pine trees. At a distance of four versts and right in the middle of the fields there was an orchard of thirty-six acres, encircled by an enormous hedge of clipped lime trees.

Of course the first thing I had to do was to go into the question of how Balovnevo was administered, and to make the acquaintance of the people who were responsible for it. The old Polish agent, who was eighty, declared that his age forced him to retire, but his assistant, Sokoloff, was willing to remain, and I therefore kept him. Accompanied by him, I went all round the farms and made the acquaintance of the Starosta.

Then I went to the distillery, the manager of which I saw, and the estate office, where the necessity for keeping proper accounts struck me—and straightaway I carefully organised this department.

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However, after having looked more closely into the question of buildings, roofs, and machines, I was soon convinced that the general order was not as perfect as I at first imagined, because, since the death of his son, my uncle, in his great grief, had apparently taken no interest in anything.

Fundamental repairs were necessary, not only in the farms but also in our house. All the farm implements were worn out and a great many were missing. The distillery was in a pitiable state. The old Polish agent had told me of this and also advised me to present a petition to the Senate at once to obtain permission to borrow money, because since Balovnevo had become entailed, I had no longer the right to raise a mortgage on it.

I had to work very hard, but I did it with a feeling of the greatest satisfaction, because I saw that, thanks to the quality of the soil, all expenses would easily be recovered by the revenue received. The distillery was soon put into order and worked admirably. The value of the property depended mostly on this, because, thanks to it, we had 1,500 acres of potatoes under cultivation. Balovnevo was in a very favourable position for this industry, for directly the harvest began, the proximity of the town of Dankoff made it possible for us to engage over 4,000 women a day.

Happily at Moscow there were already a number of shops selling American and English farming implements, so that very soon I had my farms furnished with everything that was necessary. Besides the great interest that I took in everything which had to do with agriculture, I derived immense satisfaction through my great love for nature. Russian painters have rarely reproduced the beauties of the landscape as they are found in properties where great spaces of country are covered by the same kind of vegetation. Watching the peasants at their agricultural work, one is struck by the extraordinary combination of fresh and delicate colouring which is found

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nowhere else. I was intensely charmed by this kind of chromatic effect. For instance, imagine a field covered as far as the eye could reach by young sprouting oats, four inches high. In the early morning, when the sun is a little veiled by the mist, the field looks like a splendid cloth of the most delicate green. Women in red dresses of different shades, according to the age of the costumes, forming a long slightly undulating line, are occupied in hoeing the ground under the surveillance of a man on horseback at a little distance away.

Take another example. A vast field of ripe clover, of a brown that is almost black, under a pale blue sky, on a sunny autumn day, with light white clouds floating high up above. Women in blue and yellow bodices with white petticoats are busy gathering the trefoil into sheaves. Or again, on a wet autumn day when the grey clouds are almost touching the earth; women in red are occupied in pulling up the potatoes, the green of which has already turned olive. In the places where they have taken out the potatoes there are black patches in the green surface, owing to the black earth (tchernoziom) which they have uncovered. Nature gives all the combinations: pale green, grey, and red; black, brown with yellow, pale blue, and white; olive, green, black, and red. It is up to the painters to make something out of it!

I found Sokoloff a perfectly honest man, but one of the laziest I have ever met. Very often at nine o'clock in the morning he was still in bed. This is a type only to be found in Russia. In the west, servants who got up at nine o'clock would be dismissed, whereas in Russia I was only too pleased to get him for his other very rare qualities and had to forgive him his idleness. This man was profoundly devoted to me. He was ashamed of getting up so late, but his habits were too strong for him. Every time I wanted him in the morning I had to send someone to wake him up. He seemed to be convinced that his business was only to give orders to the Starosta, and not to see whether they carried them out. Happily these

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were decent people; two or three of them struck me very much by their intelligence, sense of duty, and honesty.

My wife and daughter had started looking after the greenhouses and flower gardens. I sent for a German gardener, who settled with his wife in a pretty house near the orangery. The parterres of flowers which he arranged were very successful, as it was easy for him to get forty or fifty women to help him at any moment to plant or transplant cuttings. But we gave up the orchards, because for years past they had not produced any fruit. The old agent had been quite content to get two or three hundred roubles for the grass which grew under the trees, and to get a few hundred apples for his own house.

We spent all our summers at Balovnevo and grew to like it more and more, in spite of the dearth of neighbours. The people we saw the oftenest were the Schichkoffs and the Rajevskys. Old General Schichkoff had been at one time a Professor of Chemistry to the Academy of Artillery. He was the man who analysed the bombs of Orsini, in the laboratory at Heidelberg.

I was of course elected Deputy of the Zemstvo and had to go every now and then to the sittings, which took place at Dankoff, nine kilometres off.

Our existence when abroad had changed a good deal, because Rome attracted us in the winter now and we only spent two months of the year at Venice. Often we went to our relations in England, and some of them came to visit us in Russia.

As I went through Warsaw I ordered an American machine called a "header," which cut the straw at the desired height. I arranged that a mechanic was to be sent to put it together at Balovnevo and show the peasants how to work it.

The machine, taken to pieces and packed in several chests, arrived one day, and soon after came an American, a Mr. Martin. He was a respectable artisan, very gentle

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THE WATER-TOWER, BALOVNEVO

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and quiet. He told us how horrible his experiences in Rumania had been, where he had stayed for several months, teaching the workmen how to use a machine his firm had sent there. "They treated me as they treat their own workmen," he said—"that is to say, like an animal. I cannot tell you how much I suffered."

"I hope you will not have to suffer with me," I replied. "You will have a good room—a maid who will look after you and a carriage to take you to the machine shed and to the fields, when you take your machine along there."

He thanked me and settled down in his quarters. I gave him an excellent room and an excellent dinner. The next day a little carriage was sent to fetch him—all the more necessary as he was very lame.

The work went on for a week, during which time we saw very little of him, but the excellent conditions of his existence and the chance of talking English each time that he met one of the family made him so happy that he did not know how to thank us. "If I were not an American, I would like to have settled here with you all my life," he said.

He came one morning to speak in a hurry about certain questions which had to do with the machine and gave me something wrapped up in a piece of white paper, which I put into my pocket without thinking of looking at it, as someone called me away at the moment. About four o'clock I took out the paper again, and was astonished on opening the package to discover two gold sovereigns. I understood that the good man, not knowing how to thank me or how to express his feelings, could think of nothing better than to give me a present of two pounds. The act was so impulsive and original that I was profoundly touched. I told the story to my wife and her English sister, who was staying with us at the time with her daughter. They screamed with laughter and thought it quite incomprehensible. How could a workman thus thank his master! From their point of view it was simply insane.

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That evening I asked Mr. Martin to come to my room and see me. My wife and the other ladies of the party listened at the door.

I begged Martin—who was wearing a nice coat—to sit down, and I explained to him that his offering had profoundly touched me, but that I could not accept it and hoped that he would not be offended at my refusal.

However, these words hurt him very much. He did not know how to thank me in any other way, and he was very unhappy. We talked together of his family and of his daughter, who "operated on the piano," and many other things and after a quarter of an hour I sent him away.

My English ladies, who had been listening to the conversation, thought the whole thing absurd.

The next day the maid brought me a letter from him, on which he had written "With the compliments of Miss Alma" (our maid!). The ladies laughed very much at this, but devoured his letter and were astonished at the emphatic—though correct—way in which it was written, and also the ideas that were expressed there. This was the letter:

"MY VERY ESTEEMED MR. WOLKOFF,

"If you were a mind reader you would know it an injustice to interpret me as a flatterer.—Gratitude is man's brightest jewel: Hence, were I indifferent to your hospitality, I would be a base ingrate.—Beg of you consider a traveller as I, separated from all who are near and dear to me, and the rough treatment I have received in Europe, contrasted with all that is Noble in Man—Hospitality, I cannot help tendering you my heart-felt thanks. My knowledge of Physiognomy enables me to judge, whether you are a tyrant, or a philanthropist. I observed when you came to the field, your servants *all* cheered up and wore a *pleasant* smile, which alone are indicative of a *good* and *noble* master.—Your coming in the field reminds me so much of Oliver W. Holmes' poem, 'The Boys': 'And the children laugh too, as they troop to his call, and the poor man who knows him, laughs loudest of all.'

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"Have been travelling as a salesman for 14 years, and this place is as near 'Contentment Island' as I ever expect to find. I thank you *all* many, many times.

"Most respectfully,

"J. J. MARTIN."

Later, I told this story to some smart Americans, when I was dining one day in an hotel, because I wanted to see how Americans would regard the story of the two pounds. Quite the opposite of my English ladies, they understood not only the feeling of the man, but approved his way of expressing himself. The American workman considers that he has the right not only to accept but also to offer.

The Finnish coachman, who had fourteen horses in the stables to look after, could think of nothing but the training of a four-in-hand, with dappled grey horses. He spent his whole time breaking them in, and after three or four weeks he was successful.

We received a visit from the Protojerei of Dankoff one day. He came to tell us that the Archbishop was coming, and asked me to lend our big carriage with the four horses to take the Archbishop from the station to his convent. Archbishops on these occasions never go anywhere except in a carriage and four, side by side. It is an old custom throughout Russia, but our coachman begged us to allow him to drive the carriage with the four horses as leaders and wheelers.

The populace of Dankoff, who received the Archbishop, were naturally astonished. Happily, in spite of the crowds of people, all went very well, and the Archbishop, on leaving the carriage, deigned to admire the equipage and thanked the coachman.

One of the things that filled my heart with joy was the little cabinet in which were objects that had belonged to the Empress Catherine II. There were about twenty, comprising the most intimate articles, such as a chemise, her regimental trousers, two of her favourite walking-

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sticks, but the most interesting of all was an exquisite box containing her make-up.

I must explain at once whence this little collection came. The day that the dead Empress lay in state in her rooms, and surrounded by the dignitaries of the Court, two of her pages were on guard. Directly the Empress was taken somewhere else, followed by the whole of her suite, these two young men, full of an intense admiration for their Empress, collected some of the valueless things they could find about the room and carried them off as souvenirs. One of these pages was a Prince Golitzine, from whom the wife of my uncle—who was a Princess Golitzine—inherited them. I do not remember whether my aunt was his granddaughter or his grandniece.

When he created the entail, Mouromtzoff had these objects catalogued by the Senate, so that they could neither be sold nor taken away from Balovnevo.

In 1905, when the revolutionary bands were smashing Russia, we left for foreign parts. We stopped at Petersburg, and I asked my daughter to go back with her maid to the country and collect the Empress Catherine's things, and to bring them to Petersburg, when we could take them along with us. She was told not to speak to anyone about this, for I was afraid of some opposition on the part of the peasants, who certainly knew of the existence of these articles and might, by association of ideas, imagine that they had some right over them. Catherine II had sent my grandfather Mouromtzoff a magnificent Bible for the church which he had erected, and the peasants knew about this, as they saw it every Sunday in the hands of the deacon. The little collection was transferred to Venice.

But if we had escaped the revolution in Russia, we had not escaped the war in Italy, and these precious relics were not safe, because bombs began to fall on the town, so we were obliged to take them to Switzerland, where they were deposited in the cellars of the Vaudois Bank at Lausanne.

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THE HOUSE IN VENICE

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CHAPTER XXVII

THE more serious the revolutionary tendency of the people grew, the more I thought of my poor Karamycheff. Sitchovo was in every respect a perfect place for the revolutionaries, as they could behave there exactly as they liked without being watched by anyone in authority or punished in case of criminal action. The letters of Karamycheff told me that his life was spent in constant terror, because of some of the peasants at Skriplivka, who did not take the trouble to conceal their opinion that the time had come to get rid of all the agents. Two or three of these had already been murdered and a great many had run away.

This excellent man wrote in his letter of the 10th of May 1906:

"I have devoted myself to Sitchovo for a very long time and I am quite ready to die there, but I should like to die in peace and have a quiet, peaceable, Christian end, not at the hands of brigands who have already caused so much innocent blood to flow. Two blackguards at Skriplivka tell everyone that they must beat and strangle the agents, and when they are asked why——

"'But—just like that,' they say—'we do exactly as we want'—and in fact they do exactly as they choose.

"In the month of April they began to cause trouble in the volost. . . . 'Nitchevo!'—what did it matter? A little later they smashed in the head of Selsky with a great log. . . . 'Nitchevo!' They called the doctor, but he did not choose to come. So they will kill me, and the same thing will be said, 'Nitchevo!'

"It is a shame to have to die at the hands of bandits, but it is also shame to give way to their triumph. If there were only these two brutes, I could bear it, but *all* the peasants are infected by a bad spirit. They fear

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neither God nor the law—and God only knows how it will end."

On the 29th of May 1906, Karamycheff wrote me a long letter from Petersburg, where he had gone to see my son Nicholas, to explain the situation to him, and at the end of the letter, which dealt with business matters, this is what he said:

"It is painful to write of the sad situation in which I now find myself. The day before I came away three bandits from Skriplivka came into my house with big stones, declaring that they were going to beat and kill me. Happily there was a strange peasant staying with me and I managed to hide myself. . . . Save me, my Alexander Nikolaevitch, and let me go away! Send another agent, perhaps that will quiet them, though they say they will exterminate all of us. . . ."

And then, on the last page this is what he added:

"I have loved you, my Alexander Nikolaevitch—and I love you with all my soul. My tears prevent my writing. . . ."

Straightaway I wrote to him:

"Leave Sitchovo—do not let yourself be killed. Put anyone you like in your place. If the individual is good, all the better; if he is bad, it does not really matter, because in these times, personal qualities are not going to save anyone against the unchained mob."

But my counsels were of no avail. In spite of his fears and the tears of his sister and niece, Karamycheff had not the courage to leave Sitchovo.

Seeing that such an existence would have the most harmful effect on his health, I wrote to him to go again to Tsarkoe Selo, to my son who was then living there, and with whom my wife happened to be staying. At the same time I told the latter to inform Karamycheff that he was to get into a train and come straight to Berlin, and that she was to telegraph to me at Venice the day of his departure.

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One can imagine the astonishment and fear of Karamycheff when he heard that he was to go away and travel—he, who, with the exception of Petersburg, had never seen anything. He threw himself on his knees in front of my wife, begging her not to insist that he should go away, but after my wife and my son had talked to him he understood that he had to obey my very precise and strict orders. My son, who was then Aide-de-camp to the Emperor, wrote to the authorities on the frontier station to take all possible care of him and put him into the train for Berlin. So on arrival at the frontier, the officials met him, when he got down from his carriage, with all the ceremony that would be accorded to a great personage being conducted into the station. Everybody looked at him with astonishment and interest, all the more that his costume was extremely original. He wore, as he always did, a black kaftan, trimmed with black sheep-skin, a large pair of black trousers, high boots, and a hat of black astrachan. The officials talked to him in a very friendly way and helped him through the German customs, after which they put him back into the carriage which was to take him to Berlin.

Having received the telegram announcing the day of his departure, I managed to get to Berlin just in time to receive him at the door of the carriage.

It is difficult to describe the joy of the man when he saw me on the platform. His emotion was so great that he threw himself into my arms without being able to say a word.

I took him into the hotel, where I had arranged a little room for him, because, although his costume was just right for his employment, his tarred boots were not exactly suitable for a German hotel.

"Well, my dear Simeon Ivanovitch, why don't you do what I order you? You are nervous, you suffer, and every day you risk your skin. Why don't you go quietly with your sister and niece to your village, which is seventy versts from Sitchovo? Your enemies will not touch you

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down there, and when everything is quiet you could come back again."

"Yes," he said, "not only was I on the point of taking your advice, but in my moments of weakness I have often asked you to free me by sending someone in my place. How often, when the evening came and I was waiting for these brutes, I thought of harnessing a carriage and going away! But the next morning when I saw my Sitchovo —my beautiful hedges of cut firs, my kitchen garden, my avenue of birch trees, trained in the form of a tunnel three-quarters of a kilometre long, leading into the forest, also the mill I adore and around which I have worked so hard—I changed my mind because I imagined that these brigands, who wanted to destroy everything out of pure malice, would not do it if there was somebody there to stop them, to convince them, or soften them in some way. To leave everything that I had produced and loved for twenty-five years, and not to know what was going to become of it in my absence, seemed to me impossible, and there I remained, putting my trust in the mercy of God."

Next day I took a carriage and asked Count Keyserling to come with us. We put Karamycheff next to myself, and Count Keyserling as youngest opposite. Karamycheff took from his pocket a note-book and pencil, and after asking Keyserling his name, he wrote it down, taking the greatest trouble to express correctly in Russian letters the name which seemed foreign to him.

We showed him the principal streets, the Thiergarten, the big shops, the palaces. "Look, look," I kept saying to him.

"I see—I see everything!" he replied, smiling.

After some time I asked him, "Does what you see in Berlin astonish you?"

"No," replied Karamycheff, laughing. "Berlin does not astonish me. What astonishes me is to see Karamycheff at Berlin."

In the evening I took him to the Circus, to the box of

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the Sabouroffs, who were touchingly kind to him. I introduced him to all the family—who knew everything about him because of the number of stories I had told them—and they shook his hand. He knew that Sabouroff was a very great person in Russia, and therefore the kindness with which he was received pleased him very much.

The next day Karamycheff went back to Russia. The Sabouroffs were in the same train, so his journey did not worry me.

At the end of two weeks I got a letter from Karamycheff, from which it was evident that his excursion to Berlin had done him a great deal of good morally. He now thought himself very superior to the peasants who were around him, and that made him less afraid of them and gave him more strength to stand an existence which was so insecure. But his troubles with the peasants of Skriplivka had not ended. One can imagine how great was his sorrow when the beautiful wood, which had grown over the hundreds of acres drained with so much trouble, was destroyed by arson. The peasants of Skriplivka, out of pure malice, had set fire to it twice over.

It was not until about the year 1910 that the revolutionary tendencies of the peasants calmed down a little, and the life of Karamycheff became endurable. I made him come to Balovnevo for a time, where the beautiful state of the garden, the splendid oak trees, and the magnificent buildings astonished him; but Sitchovo was dearer to him, and he would not have been happy if I had given him a much better post in the administration of Balovnevo.

In 1911 I wrote to Karamycheff that I wanted him to retain two thousand roubles profit for himself. This is what he answered:

"When I came to that part of the letter where you give me two thousand roubles as a present, I was so pleased and astonished that I had to go back a step, and my sister cried. I could have written you a whole page of words telling you of my gratitude to you, but you do

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not need words—what you want is devotion and zealous action in the conduct of your affairs, and purity of conscience. As to words in which to express my gratitude, the cleverest man could not write sufficient. Your goodness to me is without example. Nobody in any of the villages round has ever heard of such goodness. I think that all my descendants will remember with gratitude your great kindness."

In the autumn of 1908 we went as usual to foreign parts, but this time we stopped at Venice, because my wife had fallen ill. Her liver was hurting her terribly. Neither the doctors at Venice nor even the celebrated Murri at Bologna could do any good. I asked the leading German doctor of that time—a man whom they called "the great Müller"—to come from Munich. He stayed two days at Venice to examine her, but even he could not arrive at any conclusion, either as to the cause of her illness or how to treat it. The sufferings of my wife and the anxiety through which I had passed knocked me up to such an extent that I ended by falling ill myself, and my son had to put me into the hospital at Berne. I was treated there for five weeks, after which, as they said I needed a better climate, I was sent to Vevey.

As the news of my wife was no better, I sent my Swiss doctor to Venice with an ambulance carriage, in which she and my daughter and her maid were to be brought to Lausanne to consult Dr. Roux. When she arrived, however, he stated that no operation was possible, and advised us to let her rest quietly for a few weeks or months, and then, later on, he would see whether it was possible to do anything; so we took her to a chalet in Sonzier, 700 metres above sea-level, and there we all lived together for some weeks. The fever, however, did not diminish, and the patient grew worse and worse. I sent for Professor Bard from Geneva, but he could do nothing, and there was no hope but in an operation. We then decided to take her to the hospital at Lausanne, and my daughter and I went to the Hôtel Beau-séjour near by.

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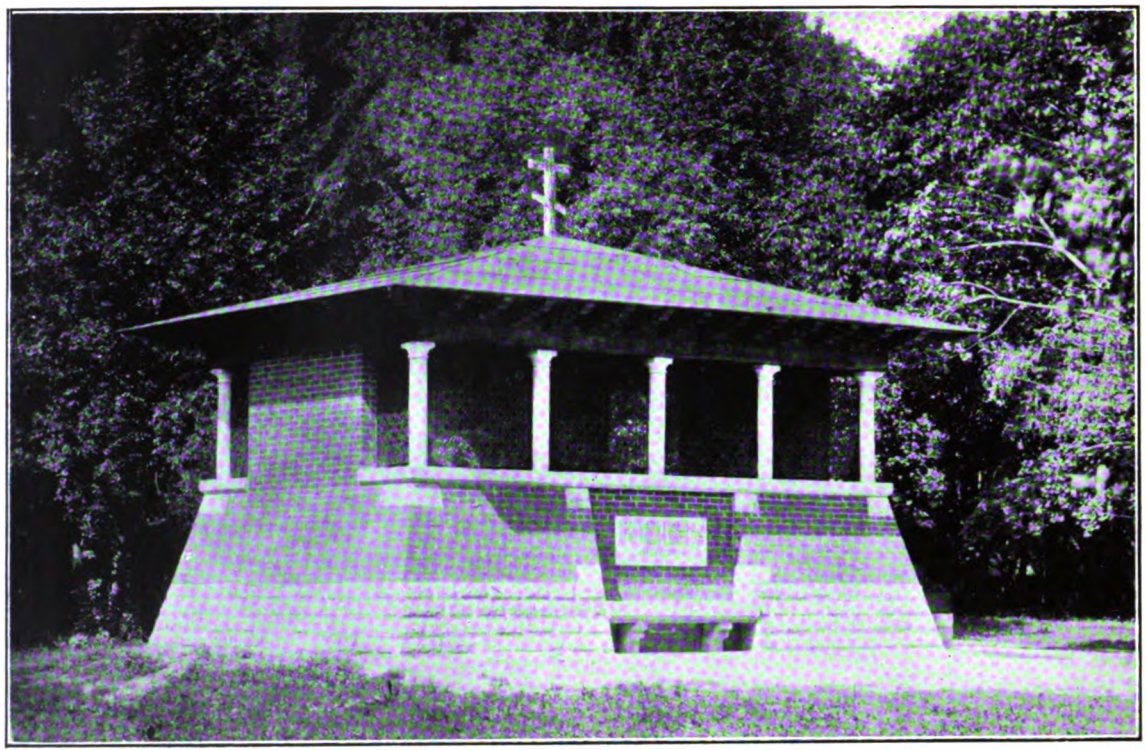

THE MAUSOLEUM, BALOVNEVO

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After a week of waiting, Dr. Roux, in consultation with Dr. Demiéville, decided to probe, to try to discover the state of the liver; but in the night of the same day we were aroused in a hurry, to find my wife unconscious and dying, killed by an embolism. She died without recognising us.

We placed her temporarily in the crypt of the Orthodox Church at Geneva, and then took the body to Balovnevo, where it was buried, for the time, in the cemetery of the church. Directly the mausoleum which was being constructed was finished, it was finally transferred there.

Having had the good fortune to inherit an estate big enough to allow me to occupy myself with the questions which have always absorbed me the most, I gave up painting, though my interest in art—and especially in art criticism—has never diminished. I went on writing on the subject and going to exhibitions.

In 1900 the cult of impressionism in painting was at its height, whilst war was declared against all imitation of nature. This war, begun long ago by the Hellenists, who wanted to create an ideal of nature more beautiful than that which one sees every day, was specially envenomed. When, towards 1840, daguerreotype and then photography began to entrench on the professional attributes of the painters, some of them, to prove that they were capable of having a higher ideal than mere imitation, began to exaggerate the effects of colour and light, maintaining always that they beheld these things. One still remembers the blue hair that was seen in these exhibitions, and Gustave le Bon, in his *Psychology of the Mob*, gives us an excellent explanation of the way in which these different aberrations were formed and propagated.

The writers who condemned imitation in painting were so numerous that the impressionists had no difficulty in imposing their productions on the admiration of the public. The antipathy against the word "imitation"

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had become so general that the artists preferred to replace it by some poetic suggestion. Unhappily this way of juggling only disconcerts the public without teaching it anything. See, for example, how Meissonier speaks of the celebrated "Gilder" of Rembrandt:

"Also in the question of colour, Rembrandt creates an admirable one for *himself*. It is not the tone of true nature—it is *a* nature—*his*—which has become truth through his genius. His soul inspired everything, overflowed everything. He drew rays from an ordinary face, because he probed to the bottom of the soul of the person he was painting and of whose soul his took hold."

These flights of rhetoric do not tell us how a tone which is not that of nature succeeds in becoming true; but the word "genius" is there to explain everything. The fact is that what Meissonier attributed to the genius of a man who knew how to perform miracles—painting "truth" —although it was "false"—really means that Rembrandt had the capacity of appreciating at their true value the different kinds of lighting, and that he knew how to imitate them. As for those pretended rays that he is said to have invented or interpreted on the ordinary face, if they were not really there, the resemblance to the original would have suffered, but if he could distinguish them, why on earth should he not imitate them? That is probably what Rembrandt took especial pains to do.

The public, reading this kind of description, forgets that it is what Meissonier calls "the ordinary face" which at a given moment can reveal all that the painter has depicted. But amongst a thousand artists who know how to catch these revelations of the soul as they pass, there may be only one who can fix them on the canvas—in other words, he knows *how* to imitate them.

This faculty of plumbing the soul sounds to many ears more poetic than that of imitation, but it explains nothing, and merely lends the artist a capacity which approximates

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to the supernatural, by relegating to the second rank the prosaic reality; whereas it is precisely that prosaic visual gift which reveals the extraordinary value of the artist and the power of his aptitudes for seeing.

Is there in truth another painter in the world who could give to the flesh of the "Gilder" so vivid a colouring or give to the eyes that look which really seems to see? It is not by the psychological plumb-line that Rembrandt obtained these effects, but by the most wonderful imitation of every delicate form and colour which his eye perceived, which his memory retained, and of which his imagination was able to analyse the colours and put them on his palette, and which his brush knew how to blend to make the subject live on the canvas.

It is only when one has arrived at perceiving the qualities of the design, the truth of the general tonality, the values of the shadows in relation to the lights, the transparency of the qualities of artistic achievement, that one begins to appreciate the intrinsic qualities of a work of art on its real merits, and that one lives with the artist in his work. Then one can follow his toil, understand his difficulties, his struggles, his victories, or his failures, and can grasp the particular character of his visual aptitudes.

To those amongst us who know *how* to see, everything is revealed, and this is enough to provoke a feeling of complaisance, admiration, or disapproval, without regarding whether our attention has been attracted by the literary side of the work or by the idea which inspires it. If it also contains a general or local interest, it is an advantage, but the work may be beautiful even if such interest is not there.

The tendency to try to get away from the word "imitation," which in the time of Leonardo da Vinci and the great masters of the sixteenth century determined the goal to which the painter should aspire in the simplest way, awoke in me the desire to study the question from every point of view.

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Several years of work led me to form the opinions which I have tried to set out in a book printed at Bergamo under the title of *L'à peu près dans la critique ou le vrai sens de l'imitation.*

I must admit that this work caused me a great deal of worry, because of certain inaccuracies which exist in it, and of which the principal one is inexplicable. I could put up with faults in the text because the excellent publishing firm at Bergamo had not a single employee who knew French. But on page 852 there is depicted the famous Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini holding in his hand the head of the Medusa. How on earth could they have called this Perseus "Mercury," even if, through carelessness, I had written it so? It is all the more incomprehensible as all the photographs of Alinari, without exception, have their title written under them. The error was the more annoying to me, as there really is not a statue that I know better than this Perseus. When I lived in Florence —at the age of thirteen—this statue, which is placed in the Loggia, attracted me every time that I went across the Piazza de la Signoria, and I always went round to look at it. It was not that I was fascinated by it, but I wanted to understand how the Medusa, whom Benvenuto Cellini has made so very little terrifying, could have produced on men the effect that mythology describes as being the case!

I sent a copy of my work to the great artist John Sargent, and this is what he wrote to me à propos of it:

"I am looking forward with immense satisfaction to reading your work and to following you in your enterprise of putting order and precision into the notions and phraseology of Art. As one goes deeper into your book it is very amusing to see what ravages your clear and logical mind makes in the familiar commonplaces and inanities. You leave burst bubbles and smashed drums all along your path. I am interested to see whether, on the cleared ground, and with your moderation of expression strictly observed, you will try to build up the description of a really great work of art."

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This letter was dated the 27th of November 1913, and in 1914 war was declared. It will easily be understood that my mind no longer dwelt on questions of this kind, and every wish to occupy myself with them was gone.

The more appalling the incidents of the war became, the more tragic grew my forebodings of what was awaiting the Russian landowners.

In 1912 I had spent several weeks at Lausanne, where I often met the charming Princess Tchavtchavadze, *née* Rodzianko. I also saw the Bariatinsky Princesses, who were living with their aunt, Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, whom I had met twenty years before and who was living in her villa, Monabri. She was a woman of ninety, remarkably young in spirit and body, and had the most extraordinary memory, remembering her impressions of youth just as well as incidents which were happening at the time. She had a quick, delicate, and subtle mind, full of humour—a quality which her brother Prince Victor also possessed—and was interested in everything, thought about everything, and remembered everything. All her friends adored her, especially several French ladies who at this time of the year used to go to the Canton de Vaud to spend the hot months.

Every day, between three and six o'clock, the Princess came down to the drawing-room and sat in an armchair, placed in the centre of several others. People came and seated themselves on her right and left, and talked to her. Sometimes illustrious or well-known people, passing through Lausanne, would ask for permission to visit the Princess. This wish to know her always amused and astonished her, but she received these people with a charming affability and delightful smile. Nearly every year, as I came through Lausanne, I felt real joy to know that this wonderful woman was still alive, that her brain was just as keen as ever, and that her receptions went on. She was the sister of those Bariatinskys, of whom one, the Marshal Alexander, had conquered the Caucasus.

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Fifty years previously she had been converted to Catholicism and liked to make converts. It was she who built the first Catholic church in Lausanne. Her three nieces, who were Orthodox, often lived with her and were never in the least influenced by her arguments, which sometimes annoyed her; whereas with me, a Freethinker who respected all beliefs equally, she liked to talk about those questions which interested her so profoundly.

At the age of ninety-eight she translated a book about her mother from German into French, and sent me a copy, with a dedication to which it was not easy to reply. After a few lines—much too flattering—she continued:

"May this friend, when the hour comes for the temporal things of this world to cease for him, and his visible being is nothing more to our eyes than dust and ashes,—may he then taste in their fullness for ever the light and felicity in which all science reposes."

I replied:

"MY DEAR AND ADORABLE PRINCESS,

"In looking at you, in listening to you, and in reading you, I always think that I am watching some supernatural phenomenon—something miraculous, capable of converting the most inveterate of unbelievers.

"It is in evoking the principles of the infinite riches of your incredible nature that my soul—which is that of a simple Naturalist—may perhaps some day transform itself and taste in all their plenitude the joys which make your soul live."

When I was with her I made the acquaintance of several French ladies who charmed me by their amiability. There was nothing vague, nothing undecided about them, as there is about many Russian ladies. I understood then why the Slav temperament is so incomprehensible to them. The Baronne de St. Joseph was absolutely astonishing in her freshness and youth, in spite of her advanced age; a Viscountess de Pins, whose sweetness attracted me very much; a Countess Las Cases, who charmed by her beauty

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and intelligence—and many others that it would take too long to enumerate.

I shall never forget the complaisance with which one old lady suggested that she would find and get a lodging in Paris ready for me to enable me to pass two or three months there agreeably, taking with me my Venetian servants.

Two or three days after my leaving Lausanne, she wrote as follows:

"I am delighted, for I have found just what you want. The apartment is very pretty—one thousand francs a month. There is everything you want, kitchen things, etc., but no linen. You will find it easy to hire at 12 Faubourg de St. Honoré. You have only to telephone to No. 57—26. A man comes and collects the dirty linen every week and leaves you fresh."

In what other country in the world would an elderly great lady have the patience to hunt for a lodging and to go into the details that she told me? I have had heaps of friends amongst Russian ladies, but have not known a single one who was capable of doing me, or of whom I could have asked or accepted, such a service. I am speaking here of old ladies. A young girl might perhaps have undertaken to do so, but would have gone about the job without using any common sense, or even thinking it was necessary to be practical about it.

It was at Monabri that I had the luck to meet the delightful family of the Marquis d'Estampes, who lived at a beautiful villa at Burier. The Marquise, the young mother of two charming girls, was remarkable for her beauty, grace, and goodness. It was a family to whom I owe immense gratitude, and I shall speak again of them later.

At Monabri I also made the acquaintance of the excellent Abbé Mugnier, an acute, gay, witty man, with a broad mind, who used to go to Bayreuth to listen to Wagner and there made the acquaintance of Countess Wolkenstein, and who refused during the war, in spite of the disagreeable

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remarks of certain Chauvinists, to take the beautiful bust of Goethe which had always stood there, out of his drawing-room.

In those days, when the nieces of Princess Wittgenstein went away, she complained of being lonely in the evenings, and very often I used to go and play a game of cards with her called "Douratchky"—at which she always won. When she was one hundred years old, the different authorities of Lausanne came to pay her homage, according to the Swiss usage, the churches in the town rang their bells, and the Abbé Mugnier came specially from Paris to make a beautiful speech.

I was at Lausanne when Princess Wittgenstein died at the age of one hundred and two and a few months. I went to see her in her coffin.

She was simply beautiful, because, having kept all her teeth except one, her face had nothing of the aspect of a corpse. But her hands seemed to be those of a skeleton, scarcely covered with skin.

My daughter and I continued to go every summer to Balovnevo, and our interests there did not lessen. Everybody was so sure in 1918 that nothing could be done with our 45 hectares of apple trees that the gardener and I decided to try an experiment, which was touch and go, and consisted in the cutting off of most of the branches. It was evident that their bad state came from the dryness of the soil, so the only thing to do was to get rid of those portions of the trees which evaporated the water which the roots should have received. The gardener did this work in the autumn. Sokoloff and the Starosty told us next year, when we arrived in the spring, that the trees were definitely dead.

I told them to dig up the grass from under the apple trees and to engage two young girls to rake the earth twice over during the summer. It is only by making the surface of the earth light and dry that one can manage to keep humidity in the deeper strata. Earth which is slightly

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raked, dries at once and becomes a crust whose conditions of capillarity do not allow the damp to come easily to the surface. When after some time this stratum, coming in contact with the earth that it has covered, becomes damp, one must again rake it. The trees of the two gardens, which contained about 120 acres, brought forth the next year 15,000 roubles worth of apples; but unfortunately this only occurred in the last year that we were at Balovnevo.

One day Sokoloff told me that the peasants insisted absolutely on speaking to me. After half an hour of conversation, I saw that they were in a bad mood, so I soon sent them away. The agent, at some little distance, who had listened to our conversation, said he regretted that I had not threatened to complain to the Governor of the Province. "My dear Sokoloff," I said, "it is not worth the trouble—we are too near revolution."

One fine day we heard that war had been declared between Russia and Germany, so as we could not go to Venice, we had to face the question of where to spend our winter. After having seen and consulted our friends at Moscow and Petersburg, we decided to go to Sweden, and established ourselves at Stockholm.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

At Stockholm we lighted on a very good and comfortable hotel, but the guests who filled it were most antipathetic. They were mostly Jews, with cheerful arrogant faces, pleased that the war would give them a chance of conducting their various large and small affairs profitably. The most extraordinary things took place. The alcohol that Russia sent to France changed its destination and arrived in Germany. A case of thermometers sent to Russia—where every thermometer was paid for at the rate of 80 roubles apiece—made the owner of the case rich for ever. A man whose valise was full of nothing but envelopes went to and from Russia—and paid his journey there and back by selling the envelopes!

The Russian Minister, Nekludoff, whom I had known a long time, kept open house; he and his wife received a great many foreigners and Russians.

We also made the acquaintance of the English Minister, Sir Esmé Howard, and his charming wife, who was born a Countess Bandini, and the Spanish Minister, the Duke of Amalfi, whose wife was astonishingly original.

Amongst the Swedes, Madame Scavenius struck us most by her charm and her culture. We also knew Count Bonde, married to a Scotswoman, at whose house I discovered one of his relations, a charming Baroness Beck-Fries, whom twenty years before I had known in Paris.

We also made friends with Mr. De Heidenstamm, the author of a very interesting book called *The End of a Dynasty*. He was a man of eighty, of an extremely green and robust old age, who often came to me and started long political discussions with the hope of winning me to the side of the Germans, but the deeper I went into the

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ALEXANDER WOLKOFF-MOUROMTZOFF
IN SWEDEN, 1916

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question the more impossible I found his point of view. Young Swedes usually studied in Germany, and the military men always went there to learn their job, so there was nothing surprising in the fact that Sweden was completely Germanophile, even without considering that the Queen was a German Princess.

Stockholm is certainly a very beautiful city, with splendid museums and good theatres, but the war absorbed all our thoughts, and the leading papers—of all shades of opinion—gradually took away all pleasure in sight-seeing. However, I did go once or twice to the theatre and admired the actors very much. The Scandinavians have special gifts in this respect, for at Stockholm (as at Copenhagen and Christiania) we found excellent companies where the principal actors and actresses were quite admirable. I think that if it were for this alone, these countries would have the right to consider themselves—from the point of view of intellectual attainments—on the same level as the most cultivated countries in Europe. They are particularly proud of their theatre, for the national sentiment is highly developed.

In February and March 1915 we went to Voksenkollen in Norway, a charming place 1,000 feet above Christiania, and stayed in a very luxurious hotel, admirably built of wood. Many people came here in the winter for sport, and in the summer for the beautiful air. At about four o'clock, after having spent several hours ski-ing, visitors would dance with the greatest vigour, but without the want of decency of to-day. There were more foreigners than Norwegians, and a great many Danes, male and female, who were astonishingly good-looking.

From Voksenkollen we went in the spring to Copenhagen, where we found Baron Michael Meyendorff and his wife.

We stayed in the Palace Hotel, which was opposite the principal fire-station, and the first impressions we received were the startling number of fires that occurred in the town. Almost every minute we heard the firemen going

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out and coming in, but we soon found out the reason of these fires. Whole families would spend hours in the restaurants, of which the town was full, leaving their houses to the tender mercies of careless servants.

Some of the Government buildings and old palaces are very beautiful. The Town Hall, though modern, does honour to its architect.

The proprietor of our hotel prepared enormous quantities of "Goulash" to send into Germany, probably with the remains of his clients' food. Some of the hotel and restaurant keepers made big fortunes by this means, and people used to call them "Goulash" barons.

At Copenhagen we saw Madame Dué again, whom we had known at Rome. She was the wife of the Swedish Minister and the daughter of the celebrated Russian scientific man Tengoborsky, and inhabited a beautiful apartment, with her very intelligent daughter. Her rooms were full of antiques, for which she had a passion. At her house we met Baroness Plessen, whose daughter, still quite young, was remarkably beautiful.

At the Opera House in Copenhagen I heard a representation of *Parsifal*, rendered quite splendidly, with a specially good Gurnemanz.

After having said good-bye to our acquaintances at Copenhagen, we went back to Sweden, and I took advantage of the beautiful weather to visit Baroness Beck-Fries at her country house, Norra-Lindved, where I spent two days most agreeably and instructively.

Whilst I was there she took me to see a family of peasants, who received me with great courtesy. These peasants are better off and just as cultivated as the German, French, or Swiss people of their class.

From there we went back to Russia via Stockholm, and arrived at Balovnevo for the summer. When we arrived, we found nobody thinking of anything but the war, although agricultural work went on. We had fifty Austrian workmen—prisoners whom the Government had given over to us at a pretty high price. They were,

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however, all good workers, and we even appointed two of them to be night watchmen round our house.

At the end of the year we went back to Stockholm, and when Sokoloff wrote to me to know whether he was to get our rooms ready for 1916, I said that we would not come as the danger was too great. So my daughter and I were spared the horrible sufferings which Russians who were less foreseeing went through.

That year, having found a furnished apartment, we did not go to an hotel. We hired a cook, and, thanks to my Italian housemaid, who was still with us, existence was quite endurable.

Amongst the agreeable people that we knew at Stockholm, I must not forget to mention the wife of the Japanese Minister, Baroness Ouchida, small and delicate, looking as though she were only about twenty-five years of age, in spite of having a son who was verging on twenty. She was gay, intelligent, and witty, and everyone liked her.

Some people tried to convert her to Christianity. "I have not the slightest objection," she said, "to changing my opinion, but to do that I must have proof."

The thing that interested her the most was the future life, and everyone talked to her about it as if it was the end of our existence. Nobody, however, could convince her, because they only proved that she would have to be content with *faith*—which the Japanese would not admit. She required proof.

In the spring we went again to Norway to pass the summer at Voksenkollen.

Our Minister at Christiania, Goulkévitch, was an old friend. He made me promise to lunch or dine with him every time I came down from Voksenkollen into the town. I often used to go, but after a time I stopped it, because Count Kotzebue, Secretary of the Legation, who was always at these meals, annoyed me by his ultra-Germanophile opinions.

The Marquis Guiccioli, back from his post as Ambas-

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sador to Japan, and returning to Italy, came to Voksenkollen, and I was delighted to see him again.

About this time I received a letter from Karamycheff, saying that the doctors had told him he had heart complaint, for which the only treatment was rest and great care, but although he was over seventy-five, this was not what his active and devoted nature required. A short time afterwards I received a second letter, which upset me terribly. This is what he wrote:

"I am very ill. I see and understand that death is near. During the whole of my time at Sitchovo, the idea of death has never left me, and now it is about to be realised. Let me clasp you in my arms and kiss you—I throw myself at your feet and I kiss them! I pray you to forgive me and God will forgive you. You are my true benefactor. I love you, and I love Sitchovo."

And then, addressing my daughter: "Vera Alexandrovna, you are a sainted woman. Forgive me."

After which he went on writing about business and telling me of a trustworthy man who could take his place when he died.

I immediately telegraphed to Petersburg to my brother Eugène, so that he could send to Sitchovo the following telegram:

"I do hope that you will get better, my dear Simeon Ivanovitch. All my thoughts are with you. With all my heart I thank you for what you have done for me, and I embrace you as a brother."

The son of Karamycheff, who had been sent to school at the age of ten, had become a worthy man, and occupied a very good place in a bank. He arrived in time to see his father alive; he wrote to me that he died on the 28th of July, and that my telegram gave him the most intense joy.

The death of this great friend saddened me very much;

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but when the Bolshevik revolution took place I was thankful that he was dead, for if he had lived he would either have been murdered or gone mad.

To-day I have not the faintest notion of what is happening at Sitchovo, and try not to think about it, but it was not so at Voksenkollen, where we *had* to think about it, because at that time Russia still existed and nobody anticipated the fate that was reserved for her.

So I gave over the administration of Sitchovo to the agent whom the dead man had chosen, and gave him orders to leave the sister and the niece of Karamycheff in the house where they had lived with him until their death.

Unhappily they could not have enjoyed it for long. I do not like to think of the moral suffering that these poor people must have gone through the day the Bolshevists came there. Were they murdered, or simply turned out? I have never known.

About this time my Italian maid fell ill with appendicitis, so we took her to the Catholic Hospital in Christiania, where the first surgeon of the city looked after her. She stayed there until she was quite well again. It would be difficult to find a more clever or kinder surgeon than this Professor Nicolaisen, or a hospital where the patients are better looked after.

I arranged an excursion to Voksenkollen, by car, for the Superior and five of the sisters, amongst whom there was a Frenchwoman who had looked after Gina, and an Italian. We gave them chocolate, cakes, and wine, and, to judge by their frankly expressed pleasure, such little outings could not have been frequent in their lives.

In summer the view over the fjord is magnificent, and the hotel a most delightful place to stay in. The celebrated violinist Auer, who used to be a Professor at the Conservatoire of Moscow or Petersburg, came every year to Voksenkollen to spend the summer in his villa.

The fame of Auer as a teacher was so great and indis-

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putable in the whole of Europe that pupils came from every country, living at the hotel and going on foot to him to take their lessons.

In 1916 there were twenty of these young people dining together in a big room. Every one of them without exception told me that there had never been a violin teacher whose lessons could be compared with those of Auer.

Most of the pupils were Russian Jews, but there were also Swedes, Americans, and Belgians. One Belgian girl had come from the conservatoire of her own country, and although she was too poor to take more than one lesson of half an hour a month—which cost her 40 crowns—she told me that this lesson was more useful to her than twenty lessons in Belgium.

Amongst the Russian Jews there was a young man who was much loved and admired by his comrades, who thought him a genius. Every evening he would sit down at the piano and improvise for his friends. Auer, with whom he was studying the violin, did not allow him to play in public, in spite of the entreaties of a number of the people in the hotel.

One day, however, Auer consented to let him play. This produced a veritable sensation amongst the public, and at a given hour we all rushed to the drawing-room.

The young man played the Sérénade of Sinding for two violins and a piano. I have heard many violinists in my life, but have never heard more beautiful tones than those produced by this artist, and I can only say that it was one of my most intense musical impressions. I am sorry I have forgotten his name, but if he is alive now, he is certainly one of the greatest celebrities.

An American girl also gave a concert and played with a good deal of talent, but the public was very hard and unjust to her. I am sure she will achieve a great success in the future—but here again I cannot remember her name. I daresay she also has become a celebrity.

At Voksenkollen I set myself seriously to study every-

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thing which had to do with the war, and tried to find out the direct and indirect causes.

For this kind of work Voksenkollen in the summer was an admirable place. The forests of pine trees around the hotel furnished charming walks very favourable for reflection, although the trees were rather poor. The fact is that the unfortunate things lived under abnormal conditions, such as one never met with in our Russian forests. These pine trees, weighed down with snow, are twisted into extraordinary shapes, caused not only by the snow, but by the fog, which, coming in from the sea, covers the snow with frost. It is as if the frost and snow were in conflict, and the frost hardens the snow, so that the branches are covered with a layer of ice which no wind can move, and which presses the branches down so much towards the ground that the tree has a deformed appearance. In winter these climatic conditions produce the most surprising and fantastic effects, but in the summer one realises how much the trees have suffered, for they are badly developed and mutilated.

I wanted to try to get a fairly clear idea of what was happening, undisturbed by the contradictory reports which came from every side, and this obliged me to work for the greater part of the day.

Sweden was frankly on the side of Germany and her papers reproduced German opinion, quoting their source, and in this way, if one also read the foreign papers, one could get some kind of idea of the situation. All that the Allied press wrote about Germany was so extraordinary that I decided to verify a quantity of their accusations.

Brought up at the University of Heidelberg, I considered Germany as a second home, and I could not believe that the spirit of the nation could have changed to such a degree as to be unrecognisable. I knew, of course, that modern Germany did not resemble the country I knew so well during the years 1868 to 1866, but I did not realise how far the influence of the victory in 1871 had extended

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and what results it had had on the character of the nation. To my great astonishment, I found that this influence had revealed itself by facts which common sense could scarcely admit, and I was entirely amazed by them.

For instance, people at that time talked a great deal about the phrase used by Bethmann-Hollweg, "a scrap of paper."

I am ready to recognise that it is not fair to judge the mentality of a man by a few words. An unhappy phrase might be uttered under the influence of some passing irritation or provoked by the manner of the interlocutor, but there are words which it is impossible to attribute to a moment of irritation or distraction.

Such words were spoken by the Chancellor in his speech in the Reichstag on the 4th of August 1914.

"We have been obliged," he said, "to ignore the just protestation of the Belgian and Luxemburg Governments. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and are now, perhaps, already on Belgian soil.

"Gentlemen, this is a violation of international right. It is true that the French Government declared at Brussels that France intended to respect Belgian neutrality as long as her enemies did so. . . . France could wait,—we could not! The wrong we do—I speak quite frankly—we will try to repair, directly our military goal shall have been attained."

I must admit, in reading this last phrase, that I could not have believed my eyes. How could a normal man suppose that he could repair things that were physically and morally irreparable? Why did not the members of the Reichstag, in the face of this declaration, assert that he could not resuscitate dead men and reconstruct ruined homes?

We have also this further declaration:

"Necessity has compelled us to violate the neutrality of Belgium, but we have promised solemnly that we will compensate her for all the damage we have done to her."

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It is difficult to read the words "we have promised solemnly" without thinking that they were written by a madman.

There you have it. Prussian militarism! These declarations are enough to make people see its inward quality and understand what a hold it could get over natures even like Bethmann-Hollweg's, which perhaps at bottom are not bad.

There you have a man who is just enough to understand the wrong which is going to be done to Belgium. He understands clearly the duty to repair it, but the man has not enough general culture to see the importance of the action which he is impressing on his country, and he is too much a petty officer not to be satisfied with the possibility of a compensation for damages caused to a country by war.

The truth is that in a country where the head of the nation is at the same time the supreme chief of the Army, honour—especially in times of war—is understood differently from anywhere else. The Chief is the only judge, and it is he who, in the eyes of his subjects, incurs moral responsibility.

From this it follows that if the Chief considers it admissible in a given case to violate international law, every faithful Prussian is ready to violate this law without the slightest scruple.

It is indisputable that at the time that preceded the creation of the Germanic Empire in 1871, the Germans impressed everyone, not only by the breadth of their general education, but also by their modesty, their straightforwardness, their affability, and their good-nature. The only fault that might be found with them was that they were perhaps a little slow, and incapable of grasping a point as quickly as the French or Italians, but everyone admitted their generally honest and profoundly thoughtful nature. These men had a respect for truth and were afraid of insufficient premises.

What on earth has happened to all these good Bavarians,

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Hanoverians, Prussians, Badeners and Mecklenburgers, who apparently were so full of wisdom, modesty, and "Gemüt"—even of humility? How can we explain the unfortunate cataclysm in the working of their moral senses?

Can one seriously admit that any Kaiser—even the most genial or ignorant of Kaisers—could by his sole influence directly or indirectly transform the spirit of a whole country? Take note that the moral decadence began almost directly after the Peace of 1871—or seventeen years before the activity of the Emperor, who ascended the throne in 1888, could manifest itself. Instead of being the cause of this distressing transformation of the German, is not the Emperor probably one of its miserable consequences?

Why do Germans judge things so differently from the judgment of other nations?

Is this change caused by some new impression, some cruel and unexpected illusion, which after having destroyed the soul of the German has finished by weakening his capacities?—or is it that he has remained the same and that we, and the Americans with us, have changed so much that we cannot distinguish the true from the false, nor connect cause and effect? Who is wrong? We or they? And if it is they, what has managed to change them so?

It is Goethe who gives us the key to this mystery, in one of the profoundest thoughts that a man has ever expressed in a few words.

This is what we read in Eckermann, dated the 29th of January 1826:

"Goethe stayed some time by the stove, then, as if struck by a sudden thought, he came towards me, and putting his finger to his lips, he said: 'I am going to teach you a truth, confirmation of which you will often find during your life. All epochs of retrogression and of dissolution are subjective, whereas all epochs of progress have an objective tendency. You can discern this

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not only in poetry, but also in painting and in many other things. All serious and solid effort, on the contrary, proceeds from the inside towards the exterior world, as all great epochs of real progress will show you: they are all, in their essence, objective.'"

The epoch of retrogression of which Goethe complained did not continue long after his death, and Germany had the good fortune to pass through one of the most splendid periods of its existence, during which the intellectual and moral faculties of its population were highly thought of by all Europe. As she was divided into a quantity of small countries, and could not even dream of playing a preponderating part in world-politics, she found herself in conditions under which the ancestral peculiarity of Germany, her innate slowness, was really advantageous to her.

This very slowness placed her in an excellent position for developing an impartial, objective, and thoughtful frame of mind. Such was Germany between the years 1840 and 1871, during the time when the different States of Germany were governed by Princes, often of a very wide culture. The university professors occupied themselves exclusively with disinterested research; their appreciation of foreign discoveries was strictly impartial, their admiration for those who were worthy of it was sincere. At the same time their theologians disliked hypocrisy, the type of parvenu amongst the newly rich was rare, and modesty and politeness were obligatory for everybody.

But when once the nation, having centralised itself, desired and was able to play a decisive rôle in the politics of the world, the slowness of the German mind, no longer an asset, was transformed into a weakness. For it prevented the nation from seizing with sufficient celerity the multiple factors which by their simultaneous co-operation determine an action, bring about an event, prepare a situation, or provoke an episode, and therefore from judging of the relative importance of each of these factors.

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The result of this is that the slowness of perception of the German can bring two diametrically opposed influences to bear on the nation, according as the historic evolution of the country gives birth to an objective or a subjective tendency in the mind. It was especially in the foreign policy of the country that the thoughtless nature of the men to whom the reins of Government were confided, manifested itself in the clearest way. In truth, all their actions showed the most surprising absence of forethought. Germany thought that she could destroy London with a hundred Zeppelins. She thought that she could starve England with her submarines. She thought that she could wipe out the transport of American troops. She thought that England would remain neutral. She thought that the French nation and their soldiers were completely demoralised. On the other hand, she did not believe in the three million of soldiers that Kitchener promised. She did not believe in the fighting qualities of the shopkeepers. She did not believe that America would come in. In short, Germany was wrong both in what she believed and in what she disbelieved.

It is to be noted that the development of science—especially of experimental and disinterested science—had sensibly declined, and the influence exercised by the Universities on the intellectual development of the public had weakened considerably. The professors of the numerous German Universities are no longer the gentle, amiable, modest, scientific men who were always ready to help everybody. The seekers of the laws of nature and truth had by this time too often turned into seekers after truth with the ulterior aim of making something out of it. And often latterly the professors enriched themselves by exploiting patents or took advantage of their situations to enter into politics. The change which has taken place in this respect in all the university centres has naturally had its repercussion on every sphere of German life, and is especially marked in those cities which used to consider their Universities as centres of light and learning.

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The teachers of what corresponds to our elementary, secondary, and public schools are no longer satisfied to be called "master" or "headmaster." They all want the title of "Professor"—a name which formerly even the "privat Docent," who was authorised to hold his classes in the University, did not dare to adopt. It is now rich men who take up the career of privat Docent, so as to shed a certain lustre on their social position. Exactly like the schoolmasters, they insist upon being called "Professor," and enjoy the privileges which this title still confers without needing—to obtain it—either to struggle or to succeed.

And thus the type of privat Docent has changed very much—and, to judge by the opinion of those who knew the older type, not to its advantage. Is this, I wonder, the reason why the legendary respect which was felt for university professors is considerably lowered? It certainly is not to be compared with what it used to be, and from the first days of the Empire there was a tendency to turn the professors into ridicule—a thing that could not have happened before the centralisation of Germany. But if the interest in pure science and disinterested research has diminished, it would be impossible to say that the same has taken place with regard to the interest in science as applied to the most varied branches of industry and technique, and the multiple needs of daily life.

When Pasteur attributed the defeat of France in 1871 to the superior qualities of the German Universities, was not the idea at the bottom of his mind analogous to that of Goethe? Why does he assign such an immense importance to "disinterested research in all its forms"?

Because it is the disinterested side of such work that develops in man the spirit of discernment, the spirit that "submits everything to a severe process of reasoning, that condemns ignorance and dissipates error and prejudice"—that spirit which Goethe in one word—and we following him—designate as objective.

To-day, thanks to the subjective trend of Germany,

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disinterested research is relegated to the second place. The great Frenchman, in sympathy with the great German, would say that the country is traversing a period of decadence and dissolution. But Goethe certainly did not realise that, because of a special trait of the Germanic nature—its slowness—his idea would develop itself nowhere with more intensity than in his own country.

And is it not also this same idea of Goethe that appears in the remarkable predictions of Fustel de Coulanges, written half a century ago (1871)?—

"This war will have the most incalculable effects on the moral state of Germany. The German people will not be the same after this war as before. It would be impossible to have dragged it into such an enterprise without altering its soul profoundly. The will to conquer has been substituted for the will to work. Those ideas as to what constitutes the honour of human life and its goal have been eliminated, and instead of them a false idea of glory has been erected. It has been made to believe that there is something that matters more than prosperity won by honest toil, and it has been inoculated with the malady of ambition and the fever of aggrandisement."

What are these attributes of German character, which, according to Fustel de Coulanges, were disappearing under the influence of new impressions, but the results of an objective mentality? And those which have replaced them, are they not the sure sign of a mentality blinded by victory and success, a mentality shorn of that impartiality which permits a man to judge without deceiving himself by illusions as to his own value—to put it shortly, a subjective mentality?

One of the most characteristic features of the Great War is the pains which Germany takes to deny any responsibility for its provocation. She reproaches Russia and France for having taken measures the importance of which she exaggerates, and which she pretends were aggressive. But the history of all wars is surely there to point out that the grievances put forward to excuse the

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provocation are only valueless pretexts which have nothing to do with reality. Every factor can be considered aggressive by a country which is looking for a pretext; but to decide whether such a country was looking for one, it is necessary to examine the secrets of its Government —discover its hidden desires, the tendencies of its propaganda—what it expects to get by war, and its methods of preparation. Judged by such standards, Germany must certainly be considered the true begetter of the war, delighted to seize upon any insignificant pretext for reproaching other nations, so as to be able to act.

And to realise the desires of Germany, it is only necessary to dip into its military literature, for, in a country where the Emperor is supreme Chief of the Army, any serious work written by a General can only be published by his consent. To those who have read the *Nation in Arms* of Von der Goltz, the word "Mission" which Wilhelm used so often in his harangues is comprehensible. For others, it is perhaps an enigma. Wilhelm did not add, as does his General, the word "civilising," but his Government and his press supplied the omission, for it is precisely to the superiority of their "Culture" that they attribute the moral right of Germany to recast the map of Europe.

This idea was, in any case, a stroke of genius, for in thus flattering the vanity of scientific men and professors, the military won them over to their side, and established relations between themselves and the middle classes. As every mission implies an idea of initiative on the part of him who fulfils it, the word in the mouth of the Emperor was evidently a slip of the tongue. He was responding to an idea which filled the heart of Prussian militarists with hope and greed, and he betrayed the existence of projects long known and cherished, just at the moment when German diplomacy was swearing by all its gods that Germany was doing nothing but defend herself against the aggression of the Allies. Those who do not believe this have only to read the following lines, which I have copied

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from *A Nation in Arms*, a work which was published in 1883 :

" It is true that the masses have learnt to appreciate the value of existence more, but, although they fear war none the less, they realise that certain circumstances may render it inevitable. In their heart of hearts they know that nations, like individuals, have a mission to fulfil. Following the bent of their own particular civilisation, nations must inevitably clash."

On page 524 this " mission " becomes " civilising " :

" There will be wars as long as there are people here below who aspire to worldly possessions and who are trying to ensure to future generations the space necessary for their expansion, security, and the respect due to them, and as long as there are people to whom enlightened minds point beyond the narrow limits of daily necessities, towards a political ideal that ought to be realised, and a historic and civilising mission which it is their duty to accomplish."

We regret that we cannot ask Von der Goltz, who later on became the celebrated Generalissimo of the Turks, which nations—apart from Germany—have since the war of 1871 had the audacity to pretend to a " civilising mission " towards other nations. Did he mean Turkey or Bulgaria ?

If we ask for how long Germany had been getting ready for a supreme struggle, we have only to turn to the end of Von der Goltz's work.

" Above all, it is necessary to convince ourselves, and to convince those whose education is in our hands, that the moment for repose has not yet come, that the prophecy of a supreme struggle where the issue at stake will be the existence and the greatness of Germany is not a vain chimera born in the imagination of some ambitious fool, but that this supreme struggle will arise one day—inevitable, terrible, and grave, as all struggles between those nations which are called forth as a prelude to great political revolutions must be. This sentiment must

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teach us to do everything by words—by the pen—to strengthen in our hearts and in those of our children our unshakeable fidelity to the Emperor—our passionate love for our country—our spirit of sacrifice and our abnegation. Under such conditions the final victory in the future struggle will certainly fall to the German Army—which must be and remain the German nation under arms."

What would Herbert Spencer have thought of all that? —Herbert Spencer, who naïvely believed that war had given mankind all it could, that the possession of the earth by the most powerful and the most intelligent races was a blessing already to a great extent realised, and that to obtain final results only one thing was necessary—the natural pressure that an industrial civilisation exerts in extending its domains at the expense of every savage civilisation that collapses before it.

For Von der Goltz that is not sufficient. There must be a supreme struggle. With whom? one might with justice ask. Because Europe lulled herself with the fond illusion that Germany, having reached the goal of her ambitions, whether historic, political, or economic, asked nothing except to be left in peace.

And the words "supreme struggle" are sufficiently explicit and reveal what is at the back of the German mind. From the moment that the victories of 1871 were not considered complete, in what could the new methods of attaining to the desired supremacy consist—save in a new victorious war? And Victory—what can that consist in, and in what can it profit a country save in the appropriation of territory belonging to the conquered nation, or in the imposition, after having ruined it, of a heavy indemnity?

Thus for thirty-five years, if not by word, yet by deed, war was declared. And during the time that the different European nations walked guilelessly, thinking of nothing but their intellectual and moral progress, Germany alone secretly prepared all possible methods of destruction, whether allowed by the Conventions of War or forbidden.

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She filled her arsenals, constructed her factories, improved her Zeppelins, invented new cannons, and made machines for poison gas to asphyxiate soldiers. How was it that the neighbouring countries did not take fright? With rare exceptions neither diplomats nor military agents resident in Germany understood the psychic evolution through which the country was passing.

The reason of our protracted stay in Scandinavia was my dislike of the sea voyage, otherwise I should long ago have gone to England, where my son Nicholas was Naval Attaché at the Embassy, and could easily obtain for me facilities for going to France.

At last we really had to make up our mind, and one day, after having studied all the time-tables of the different boats which ran between Norway and England, we went to Bergen to take our places on the biggest of these, which was called *Jupiter*. To my immense joy, the sea was calm and the voyage bearable. We had, however, a momentary scare. The big bell sounded and the boat stopped. Warships, whose flags we could not distinguish, surrounded us, and we knew that sometimes Germans intimated in this way that certain passengers had to be given up. Ten minutes passed in great anxiety, and then we understood that the warships were English.

Three sailors came on board our boat, of whom two almost immediately left, while the third examined the papers of the ship and the passengers.

Arrived at Newcastle, we found that the Russian Consul had sent a man down to help us through the Customs, and we went on that same night to London. The journey there was rather lugubrious as there were rumours of Zeppelins; in the stations there was not a single light. However, we arrived in London safe and sound.

My son Gabriel, who was still Secretary to the Embassy at that time, asked me one day rather nervously if I had not said something pro-German. I, of course, said "No"; and then he told me that I was on the "Black List"—

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which contained the names of people who could not be trusted. This he told me under the seal of secrecy.

Two or three days later I was dining, together with my daughter and my two sons, with the Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorff. I do not know how the conversation led to the "Black List," but I begged Count Benckendorff to tell me what to do to get my name removed from it.

He replied that it was the unfortunate mistake of another diplomat, and said, "Please do not mention the question when you are in Paris. Everything is already arranged—promise me to take no further action in the matter." I gave the desired promise.

The news we received from Venice was not very pleasant. Aeroplanes were beginning to bombard the city, and one day our caretaker telegraphed that a bomb had broken the windows of our palace. I replied at once that she was to have them put in again, but after several days another telegram informed me that this was useless, as any day the same thing might happen. So then I decided to send our maid Gina to Venice at once, with an order to put the glass back, for I could not bear the idea of leaving my house open to the weather.

Needless to say I at once began to go into the question of how to get to France. My son Nicholas told me it was useless to try to go to Boulogne or Calais, as these two routes were reserved for military service. I then wrote to our Military Attaché, General Yermoloff, who confirmed the opinion of Nicholas. They also told me that if I went via Southampton, I should be obliged to take the first boat that happened to be there when I arrived from London, for the police would not allow anyone to stop at Southampton.

I went down there with my son, to find out if it was true, and discovered that it was entirely false. The charming proprietor of a beautiful hotel there was only too delighted for me to stay there as long as I liked, to wait for fine weather. So when I got back to London, I

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decided to return to Southampton and settle at this hotel, when Nicholas brought me a letter from the English authorities saying that they would be pleased to make an exception in our favour and let us go via Folkestone to Boulogne.

Our joy was great, although we were rather nervous about our enormous pile of baggage. We went to Folkestone and spent a night at the hotel. The next day we got someone to take our trunks and were directed to a long pier at the end of which the boat was anchored.

I had not been able to find the military authorities to whom I was given a letter, but my daughter began to talk to a charming Colonel, who was very good to us and gave us the necessary directions for getting to the boat.

Troops of soldiers were marching in column, and we walked beside them, while our luggage was taken on a truck. Once at the boat we were taken straight on board, and they put on our luggage without any formality. We could hardly induce the men to take a few shillings as a tip.

The voyage was lovely, although we expected German submarines any moment. When we reached Boulogne an automobile was awaiting us, kindly sent by the Naval Attaché, and took us to the hotel.

We spent the night in a *horrible* hotel, and after walking a little about the town we went to the station. Employees made all the passengers proceed, one by one, through an iron door, and examined their papers as they passed. Suddenly, just as I was passing through the door, someone put his hand before my eyes. Not knowing what it meant, I hit out pretty hard, to get him to remove his hand. But it appeared that it was the hand of a detective who was following us to protect us, and to show who he was, he had held a card on which my name and his were inscribed. The card was so near my eyes that I could neither see nor understand, but the employees, who knew what it was all about, began to laugh when they saw that I could not recognise my own name.

We then left by an almost empty train. In our first-

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class carriage there was no one except a Red Cross sister, with whom we talked very agreeably. To the right and left one saw nothing but soldiers, tents, little wooden huts, and cemeteries full of crosses—and thus we passed through the whole English Army. I do not remember how long the journey to Paris took, but we stayed the night at the Hôtel Continental, and soon after transferred ourselves to the Hôtel d'Albe, to settle down in a very spacious apartment with a bath-room and a pleasant sitting-room.

We were delighted to see our excellent French friends, but life seemed very sad, although the great "Berthas" had not yet made their appearance. Aeroplanes passed over the city sometimes at night, and then the sirens woke us up with their melancholy wails.

One day we paid a visit to the wonderful Baronne de St. Joseph, but to find her we had to go to a hospital where she was looking after the wounded. Dressed in white, gay, active, and adoring her patients, this woman of more than seventy-five was too admirable for expression.

Unfortunately I soon fell ill from influenza, and when after two weeks I began to get better, I suddenly felt a curious pain in the muscles behind my left ear. I was rather frightened, thinking that it must be one of those inflammations resulting from influenza which necessitate trepanning, and I sent for the doctor. He at once told me that I was suffering from "zona" (shingles), a frightful illness which I had never heard of before. My face began to alter; behind the left ear a kind of enormous goitre formed, and on my forehead, on the same side, hard transparent growths appeared.

Further, the skin above the eye changed little by little into a kind of crust, about a centimetre thick, and became red, covered with grey spots. Soon after it burst in several places and a little blood came out. All this side of my head was covered with a disinfectant powder and bound up in linen. My eyelid was so inflamed that I could not

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open the eye at all, and a large swelling came behind the right ear too. These two swellings grew with such rapidity that they were soon the size of the head of a small child, without however causing me any pain, though the forehead and the eye tormented me day and night; but it was the end of my nose which suffered especially. You would have thought that someone was sticking in a needle, at the rate of ten times per minute, at the same place. I asked for morphia, but the next day the pain suddenly stopped. The other pain, however, went on without ceasing for six months, and was quite horrible.

It would be impossible to say how kind and charitable the French ladies of my acquaintance were. While I was too ill to receive them, they sent to ask for news every day. Directly the two "children's heads" which had appeared on my neck were gone, and I could bandage my face, they often came to sit with me, especially when I was living alone with my Gina, having sent my daughter to Venice to save the souvenirs of Catherine II and take them to Switzerland.

The Countess of Cossé brought me fresh eggs from the country. The Marquise d'Estampes, with angelic kindness, came constantly to see me. M. and Madame Mimaut, Madame Cambefort, and Madame Negroponte did not forget me, and the excellent Abbé Mugnier often managed to give me an hour of his time. But it is to the Marquis d'Estampes that I owe my life. Without him, all the bandages with which my head was enveloped would not have enabled me to stand the cold which began to be felt in the room as well as outside. The cold retarded the cure, and there was a disposition to gangrene in that part of my forehead where the skin had burst.

One day the proprietor of the hotel came to tell me that there was neither wood nor coal in the whole of Paris, and that for all the gold in the world he could not give me any for my fires.

I really thought that I was done for. The bandages round my head, though fairly warm, left exposed those

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bare places which could not stand any pressure, so I was frightfully sensitive to the cold, and the fear of seeing the temperature of my room go below zero scared me terribly—when suddenly an enormous wagon full of wood, cut on his property, came from the Marquis d'Estampes; and that was not all, for the Marquis insisted that the proprietor should let me keep my wood in the bath-room. No hotel-keeper would have done such a thing for a stranger, and had the wood been stored in the cellars, one could only be sure that it would have disappeared very soon.

This generosity on the part of the Marquis filled my heart with an imperishable gratitude.

In the spring, when the fine weather returned, the doctor advised me to go to Versailles, where I found excellent rooms at the Hôtel Trianon.

Almost completely well again, I said good-bye to my dear French friends and started for Switzerland. I could scarcely see at all and a celebrated oculist told me always to wear a pad on this eye, as it could never get well and its influence would spoil my good eye. However, after a year or so the invalid eye became quite right again, but the pain in my forehead has never completely disappeared, and Dr. Demiéville told me that people of more than seventy years of age are scarcely ever completely cured.

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CHAPTER XXIX

WHILE I was at Florence in 1918 I received the following telegram :

" Balovnevo house buildings workshops distillery all completely destroyed Furniture and Inventory burnt Spirits of wine stolen and the land seized by the Agrarian Committee.—Sokoloff."

Soon after this the complete annihilation of the whole of Russia by the Bolsheviks took place.

Since that time I have never been able to find out whether Sokoloff is still alive, or whether the tomb of my wife is covered by the ruins of the destroyed mausoleum.

What remains to me to-day is the remembrance of a life of intense activity, free from the cares or ambitions of a Governmental career, and filled by intellectual interests and the friendship of the men and women most worth knowing. Now, at the age of eighty-four, I bless the circumstances which developed in me the love of agriculture and led me, sixty years ago, to choose a life of study and hard work rather than one like that lived by the majority of my countrymen, who neglected their duty towards the lands they had inherited from their fathers.

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APPENDIX

UNTIL the reign of Peter the Great, the nobles in Russia had no titles. Thus even his mother, Natalia Kirillovna Narychkina, had none. The only title in the land was that of prince, which meant the descendants of greater or smaller reigning princes.

The Narychkine family, very conspicuous in Russian aristocracy, has remained without a title, and a quantity of other families belonging to the ancient nobility are in the same position.

In 1785 the Empress Catherine II made a law by which the hereditary nobility was divided into six classes :

(1) Nobility (conferred for non-official social service).
(2) The military nobility (automatically acquired).
(3) The nobility acquired by Civil Service (automatically acquired).
(4) The foreign nobility.
(5) All titled families.
(6) The ancient nobility.

To be inscribed *among these last*, the family had already to be in possession of lands and serfs before the year 1685. The inscription of these families was naturally made from documents. It is difficult to know what documents remain in Russia after their wholesale destruction under the Bolshevik régime, where they were often used to light the stoves with !

The Wolkoff family is one of the most numerous in Russia. There are Wolkoffs belonging to the ancient nobility, to the recent one, to the bourgeoisie, and there are peasants of that name.

The day that Russia will again become Russia, my descendants may perhaps be glad to know that the document confirming their appurtenance to the ancient nobility, exists.

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